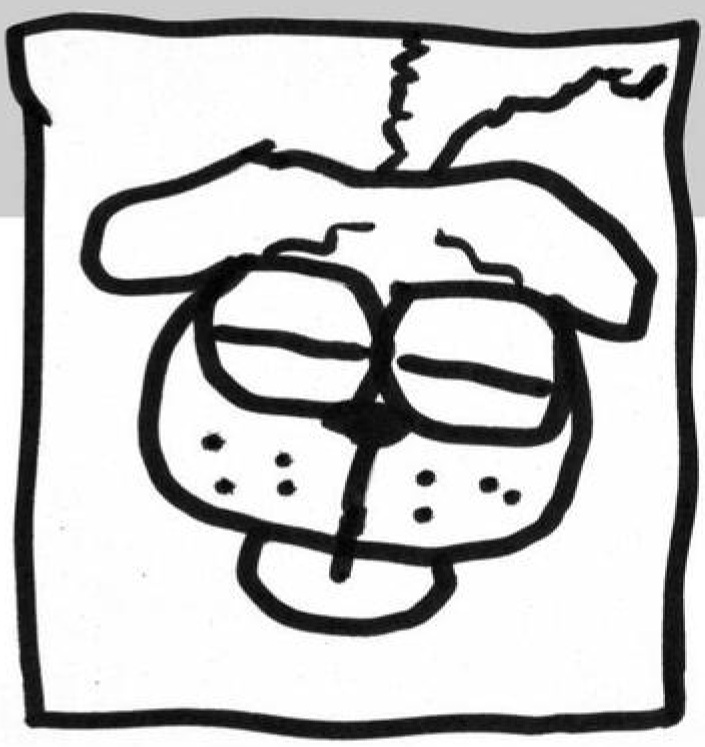
HUNTER HUNTER

22

SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED

Story & Art by

YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI



冨樫義博

I hope you'll enjoy this in conjunction with the serialization in *Weekly Shonen Jump*.

Yoshihiro Togashi

Yoshihiro Togashi's manga career began in 1986 at the age of 20, when he won the coveted Osamu Tezuka Award for new manga artists. He debuted in the Japanese **Weekly Shonen Jump** magazine in 1989 with the romantic comedy **Tende Shôwaru Cupid**. From 1990 to 1994 he wrote and drew the hit manga **YuYu Hakusho**, which was followed by the dark comedy science-fiction series **Level E**, and finally this adventure series, **Hunter x Hunter**, available from VIZ Media's SHONEN JUMP Advanced imprint. In 1999 he married the manga artist Naoko Takeuchi.

HUNTER X HUNTER Volume 22
The SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY
YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

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Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
VP of Publishing Licensing/Rika Inouye
VP of Sales/Gonzalo Ferreyra
Sr. VP of Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED Manga Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, September 2008

VIZ media
www.viz.com

RATED T+ FOR OLDER TEEN

PARENTAL ADVISORY
HUNTER X HUNTER is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. Contains realistic violence and mature language.
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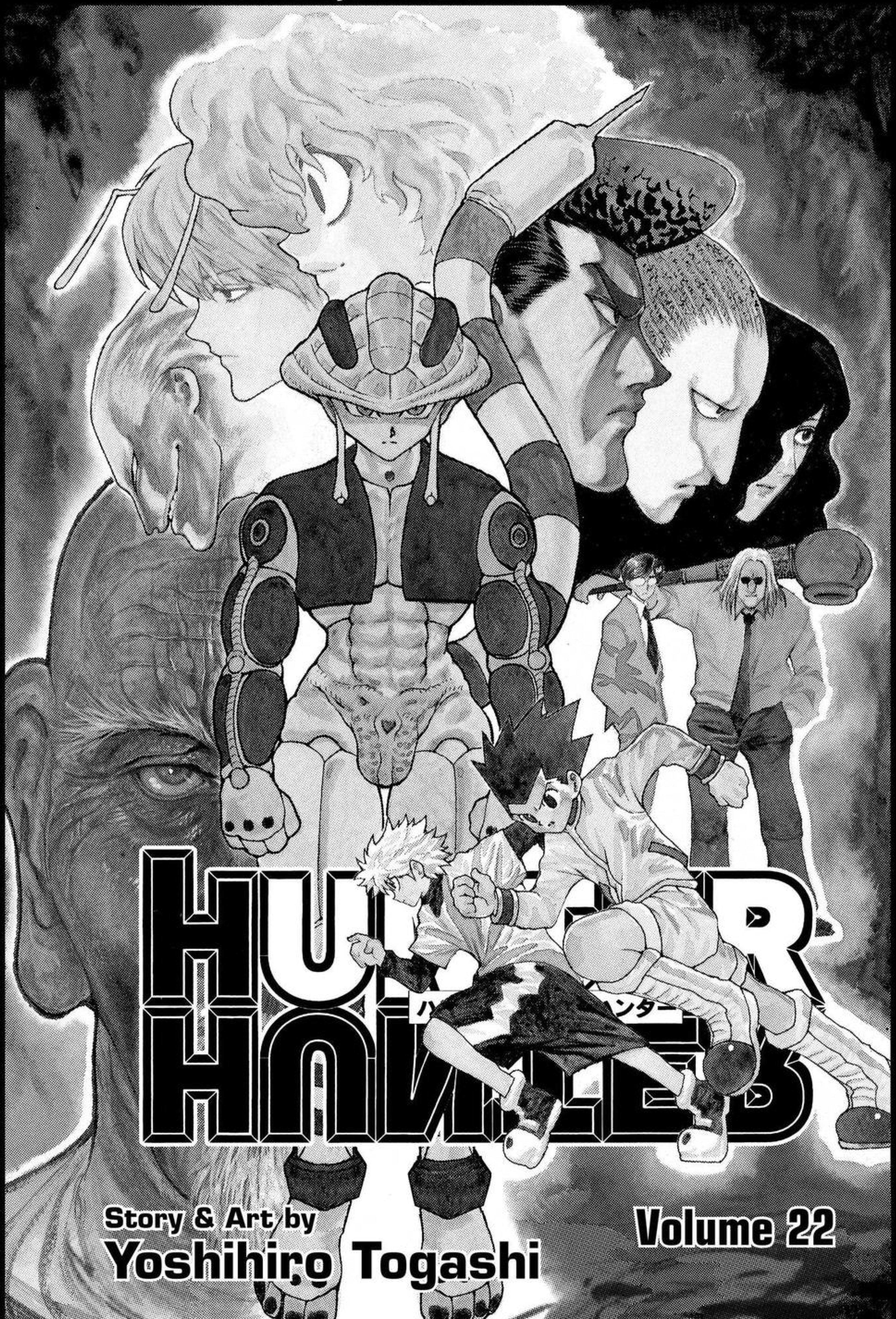
SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED MANGA



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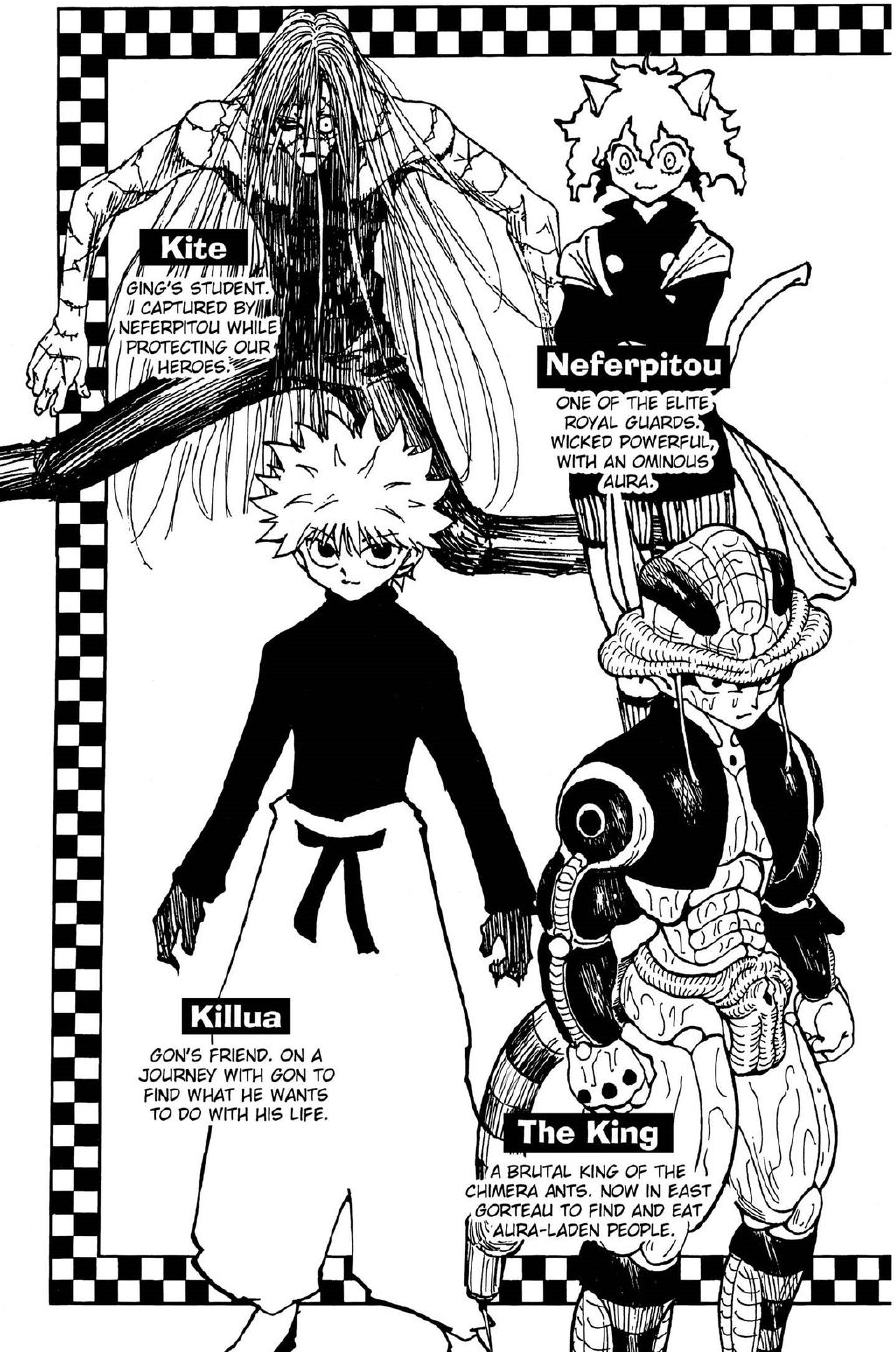
Volume 22



Kite

GING'S STUDENT. CAPTURED BY NEFERPITOU WHILE PROTECTING OUR HEROES.

Neferpitou

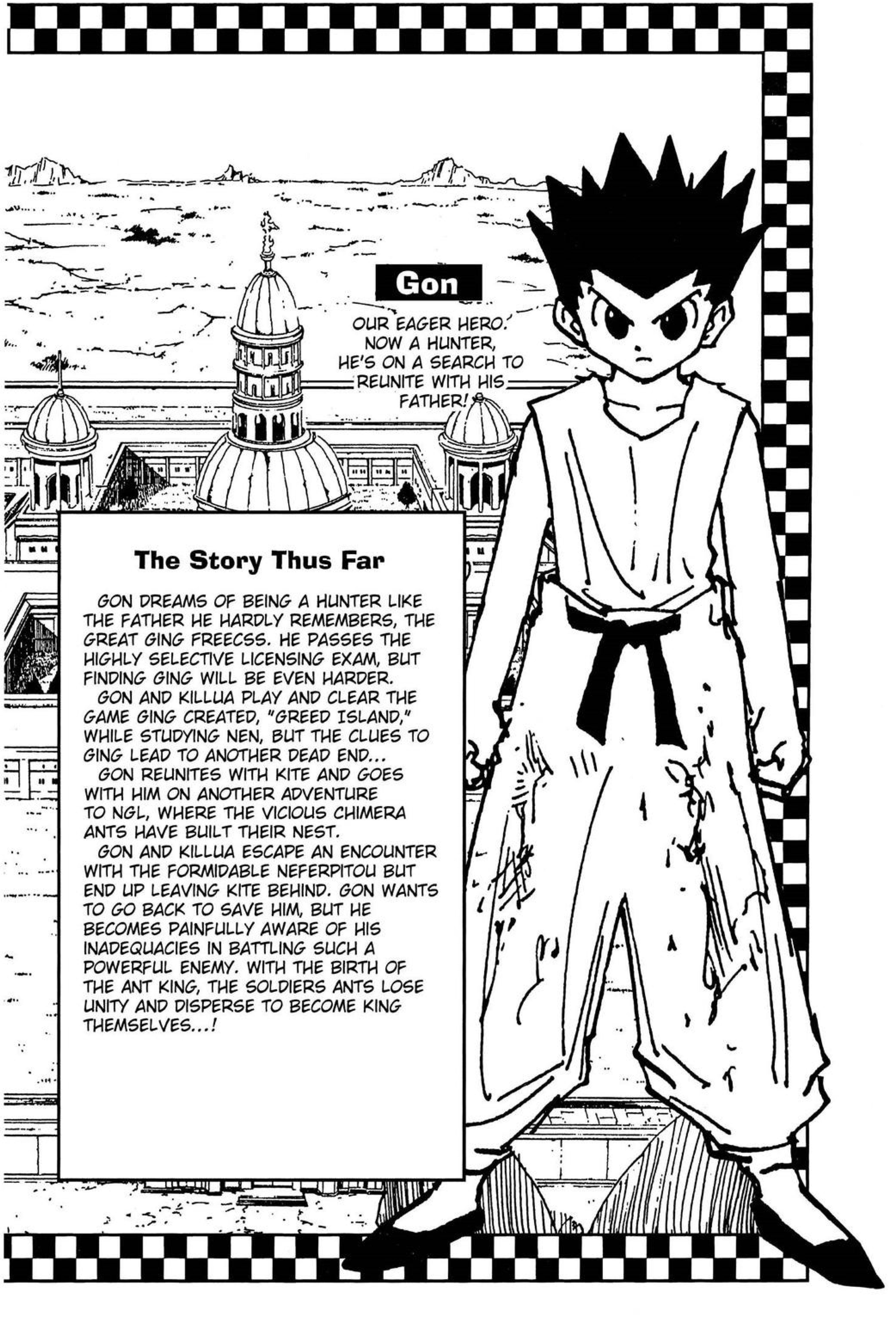
ONE OF THE ELITE ROYAL GUARDS. WICKED POWERFUL, WITH AN OMINOUS AURA.

Killua

GON'S FRIEND. ON A JOURNEY WITH GON TO FIND WHAT HE WANTS TO DO WITH HIS LIFE.

The King

A BRUTAL KING OF THE CHIMERA ANTS. NOW IN EAST GORTEAU TO FIND AND EAT AURA-LADEN PEOPLE.



Gon

OUR EAGER HERO. NOW A HUNTER, HE'S ON A SEARCH TO REUNITE WITH HIS FATHER!

The Story Thus Far

GON DREAMS OF BEING A HUNTER LIKE THE FATHER HE HARDLY REMEMBERS, THE GREAT GING FREECSS. HE PASSES THE HIGHLY SELECTIVE LICENSING EXAM, BUT FINDING GING WILL BE EVEN HARDER.

GON AND KILLUA PLAY AND CLEAR THE GAME GING CREATED, "GREED ISLAND," WHILE STUDYING NEN, BUT THE CLUES TO GING LEAD TO ANOTHER DEAD END...

GON REUNITES WITH KITE AND GOES WITH HIM ON ANOTHER ADVENTURE TO NGL, WHERE THE VICIOUS CHIMERA ANTS HAVE BUILT THEIR NEST.

GON AND KILLUA ESCAPE AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE FORMIDABLE NEFERPITOU BUT END UP LEAVING KITE BEHIND. GON WANTS TO GO BACK TO SAVE HIM, BUT HE BECOMES PAINFULLY AWARE OF HIS INADEQUACIES IN BATTLING SUCH A POWERFUL ENEMY. WITH THE BIRTH OF THE ANT KING, THE SOLDIERS ANTS LOSE UNITY AND DISPERSE TO BECOME KING THEMSELVES...!

HUNTER×HUNTER

Volume 22

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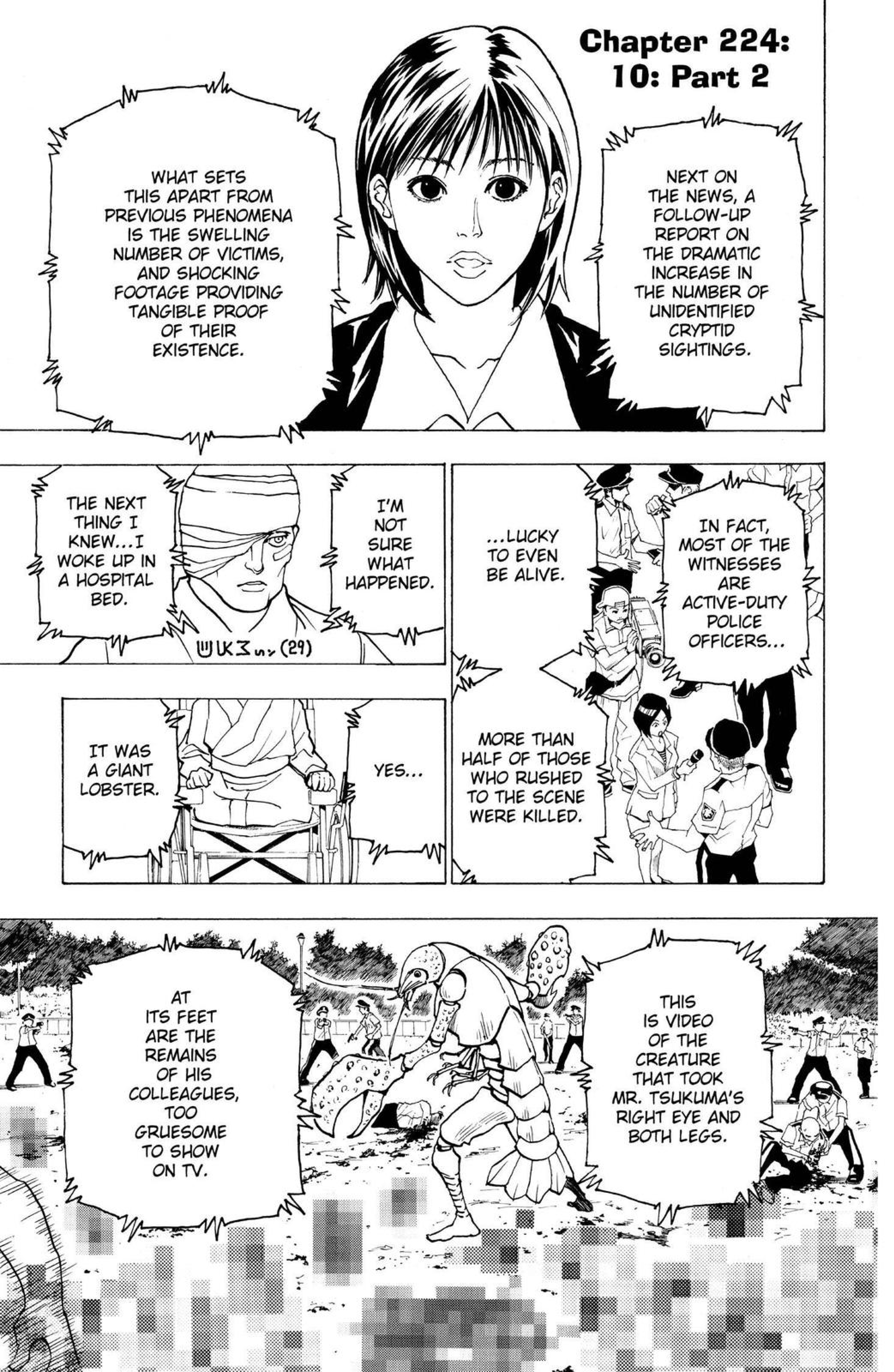
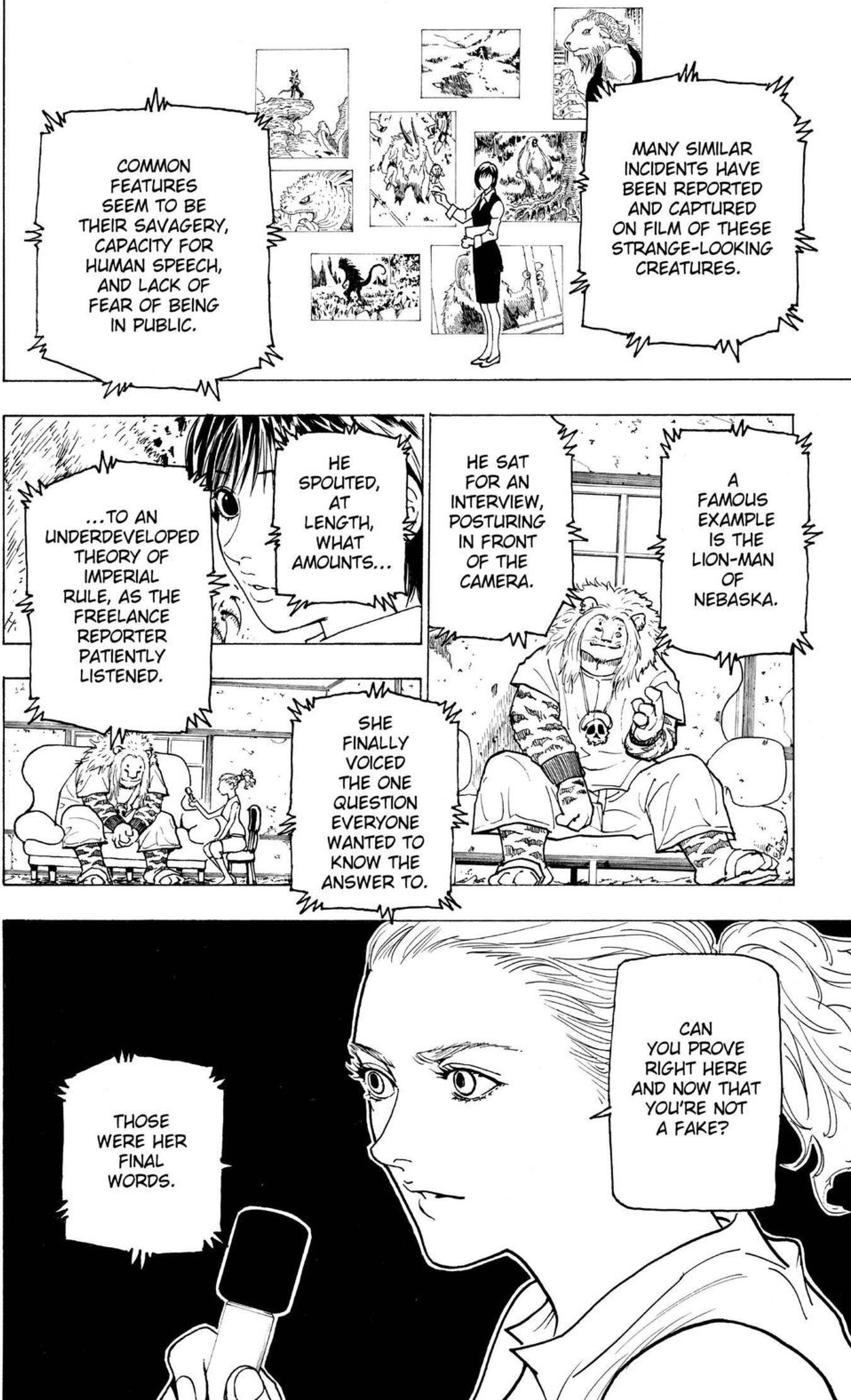
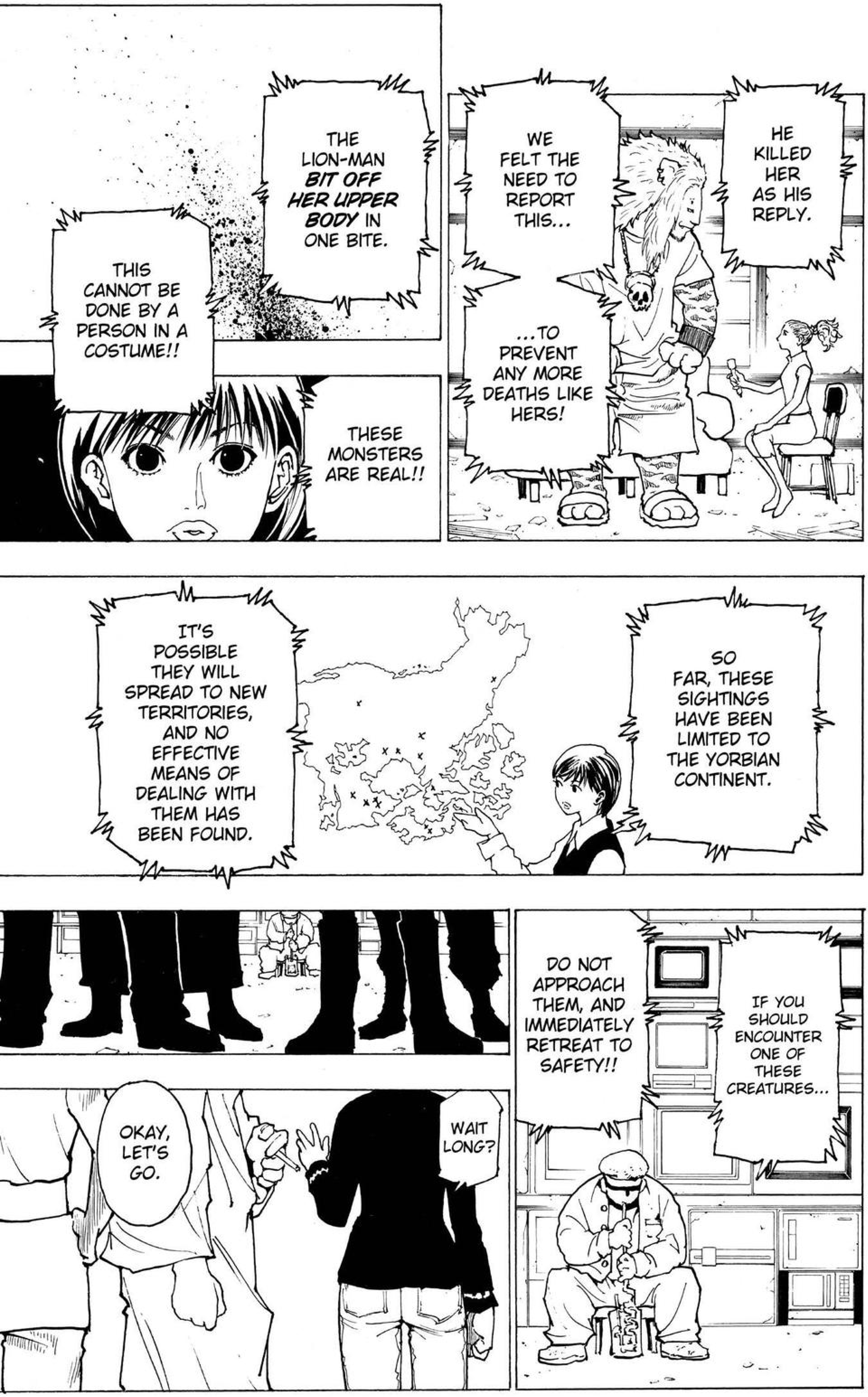
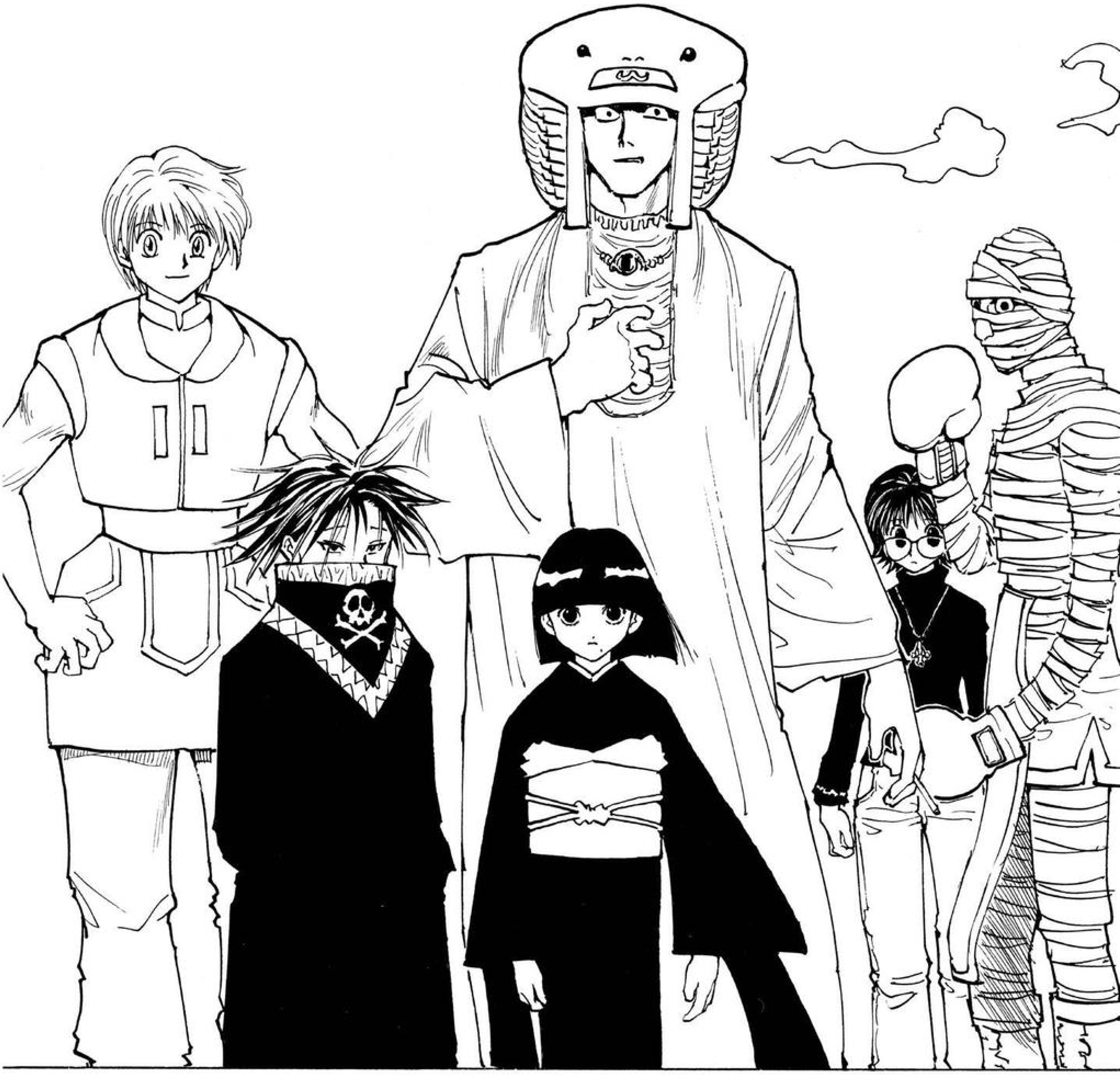
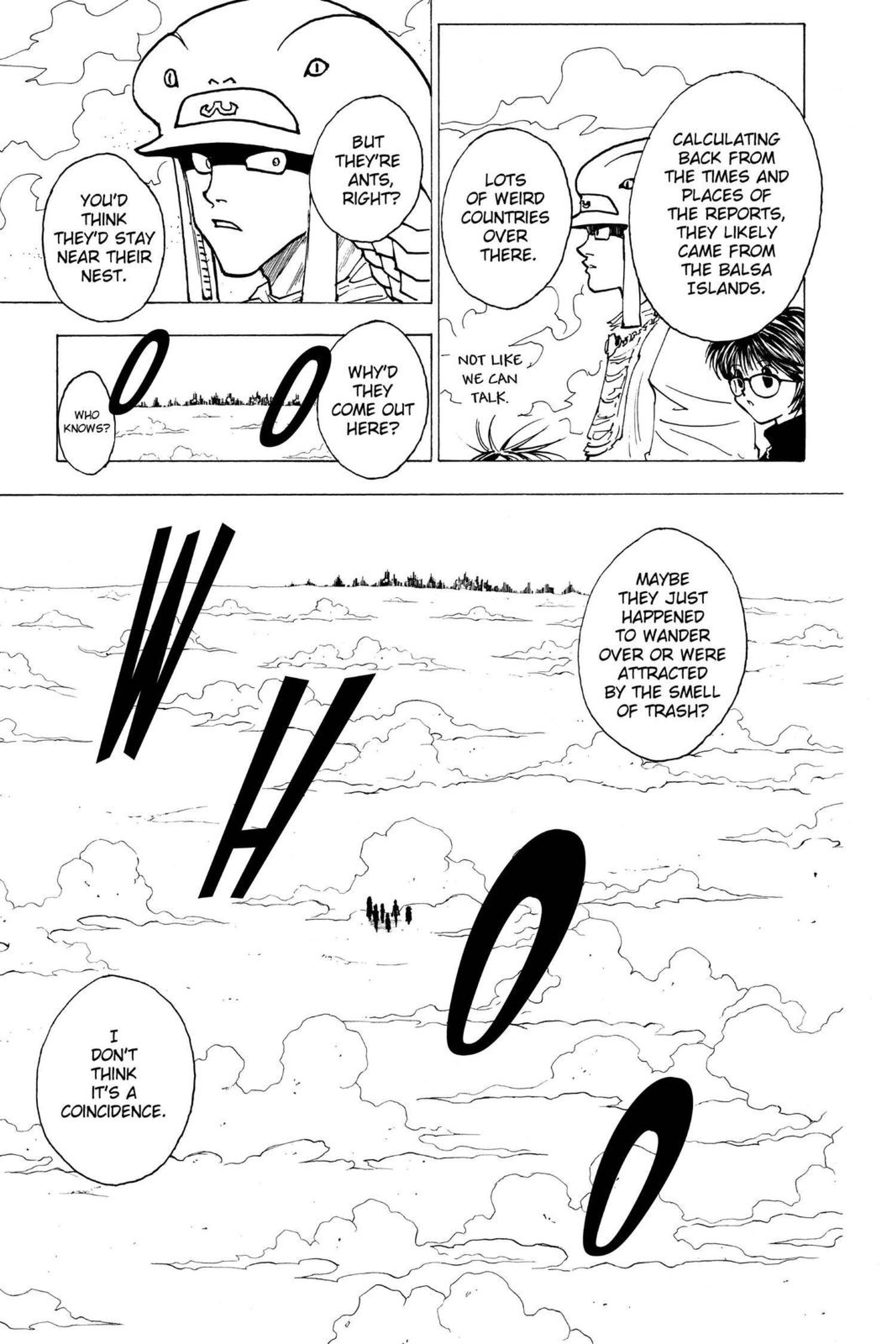

NEXT ON THE NEWS, A FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UNIDENTIFIED CRYPTID SIGHTINGS.
WHAT SETS THIS APART FROM PREVIOUS PHENOMENA IS THE SWELLING NUMBER OF VICTIMS, AND SHOCKING FOOTAGE PROVIDING TANGIBLE PROOF OF THEIR EXISTENCE.
IN FACT, MOST OF THE WITNESSES ARE ACTIVE-DUTY POLICE OFFICERS...
...LUCKY TO EVEN BE ALIVE.
MORE THAN HALF OF THOSE WHO RUSHED TO THE SCENE WERE KILLED.
I'M NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED.
THE NEXT THING I KNEW...I WOKE UP IN A HOSPITAL BED.
ツクマさん(29)
YES...
IT WAS A GIANT LOBSTER.
THIS IS VIDEO OF THE CREATURE THAT TOOK MR. TSUKUMA'S RIGHT EYE AND BOTH LEGS.
AT ITS FEET ARE THE REMAINS OF HIS COLLEAGUES, TOO GRUESOME TO SHOW ON TV.

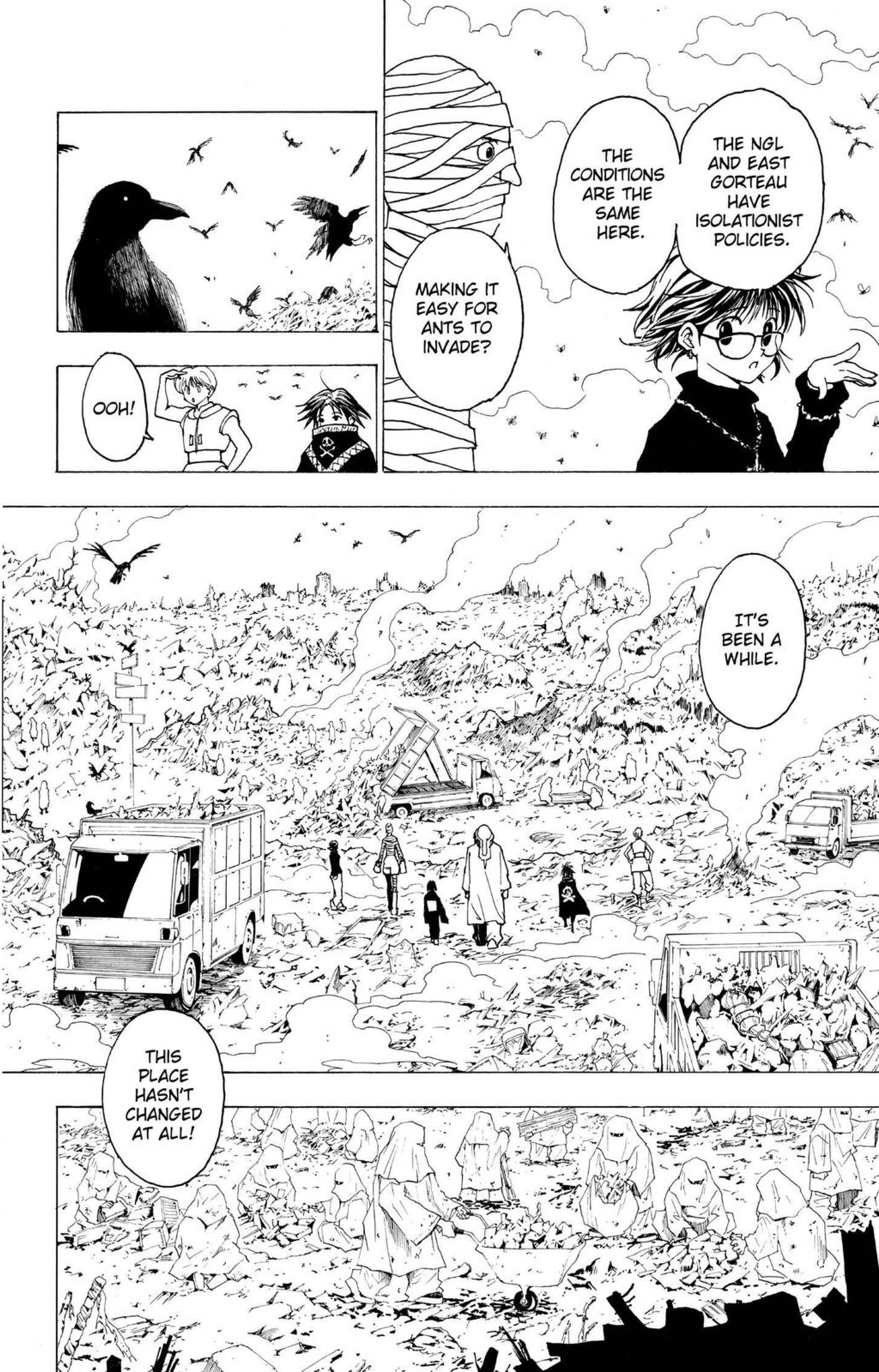

MANY SIMILAR INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AND CAPTURED ON FILM OF THESE STRANGE-LOOKING CREATURES.
COMMON FEATURES SEEM TO BE THEIR SAVAGERY, CAPACITY FOR HUMAN SPEECH, AND LACK OF FEAR OF BEING IN PUBLIC.
A FAMOUS EXAMPLE IS THE LION-MAN OF NEBASKA.
HE SAT FOR AN INTERVIEW, POSTURING IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA.
HE SPOUTED, AT LENGTH, WHAT AMOUNTS…
…TO AN UNDERDEVELOPED THEORY OF IMPERIAL RULE, AS THE FREELANCE REPORTER PATIENTLY LISTENED.
SHE FINALLY VOICED THE ONE QUESTION EVERYONE WANTED TO KNOW THE ANSWER TO.
CAN YOU PROVE RIGHT HERE AND NOW THAT YOU'RE NOT A FAKE?
THOSE WERE HER FINAL WORDS.


HE KILLED HER AS HIS REPLY.
WE FELT THE NEED TO REPORT THIS...
...TO PREVENT ANY MORE DEATHS LIKE HERS!
THE LION-MAN ***BIT OFF HER UPPER BODY*** IN ONE BITE.
THIS CANNOT BE DONE BY A PERSON IN A COSTUME!!
THESE MONSTERS ARE REAL!!
SO FAR, THESE SIGHTINGS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO THE YORBIAN CONTINENT.
IT'S POSSIBLE THEY WILL SPREAD TO NEW TERRITORIES, AND NO EFFECTIVE MEANS OF DEALING WITH THEM HAS BEEN FOUND.
IF YOU SHOULD ENCOUNTER ONE OF THESE CREATURES...
DO NOT APPROACH THEM, AND IMMEDIATELY RETREAT TO SAFETY!!
WAIT LONG?
OKAY, LET'S GO.

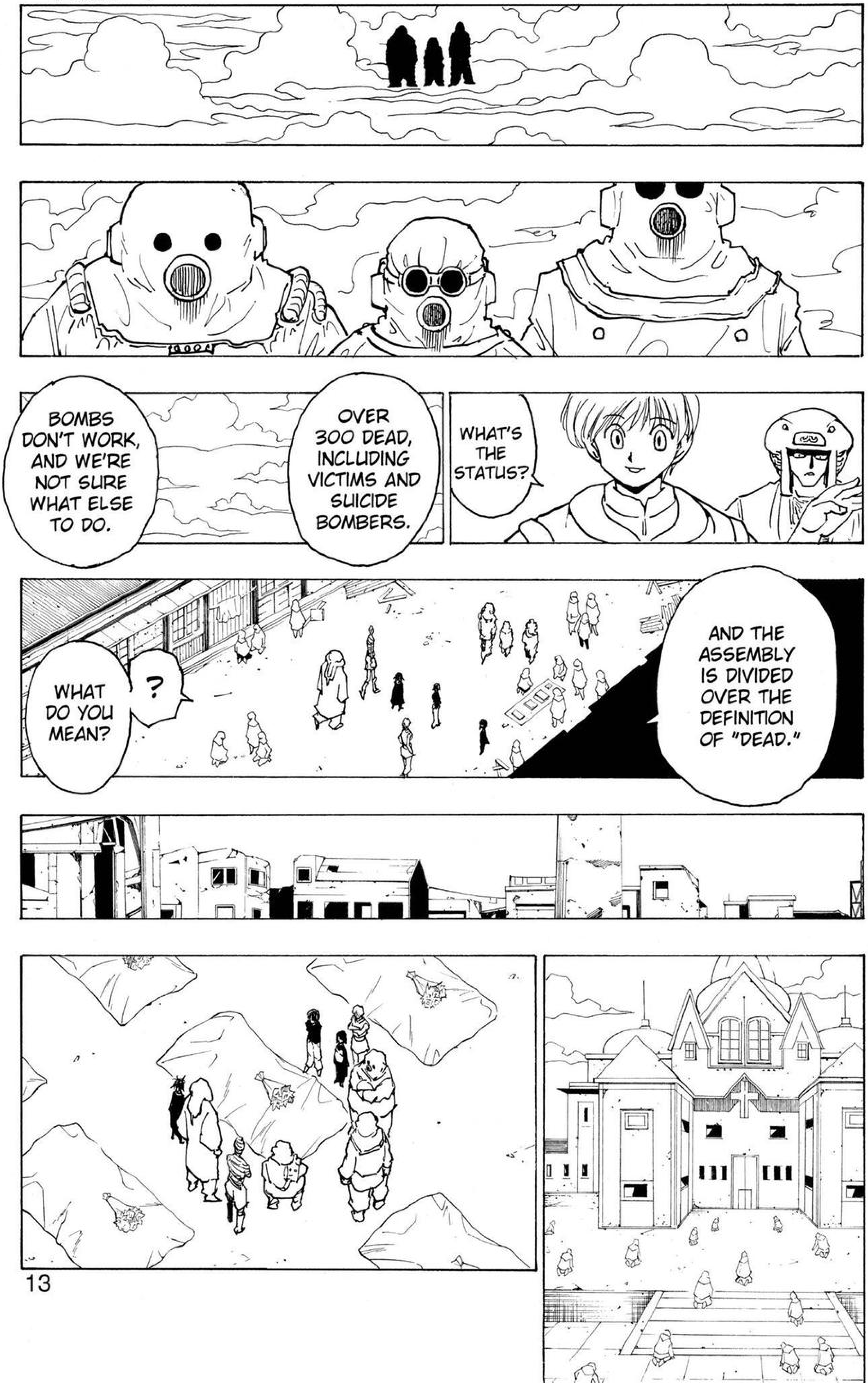
Chapter 224: 10: Part 2

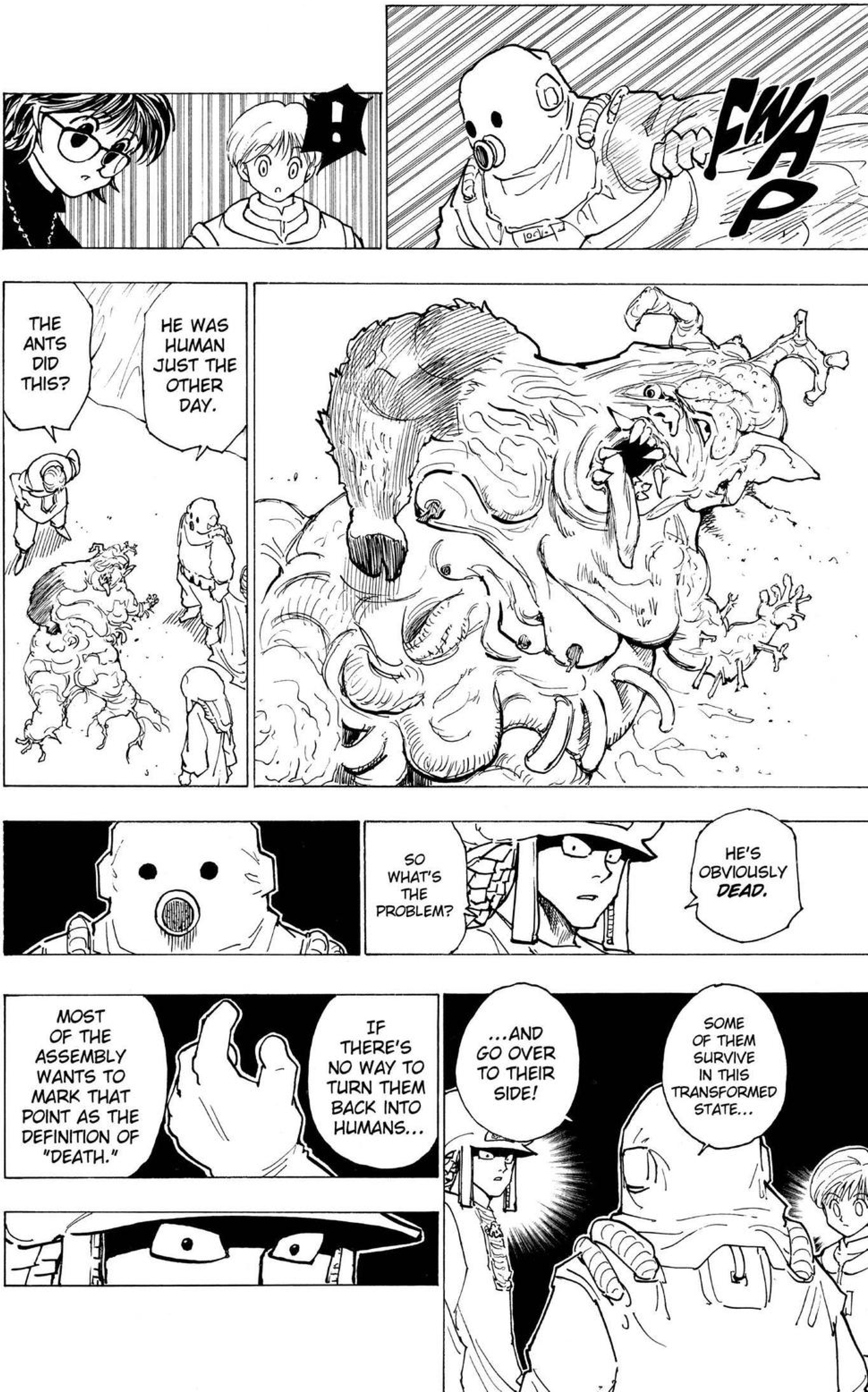

WHOOOOOOOOOOO
I HEAR THEY CALLED "CHIMERA ANTS."
YEAH.
THEY'VE PROBABLY GOT HUMAN DNA MIXED IN.


CALCULATING BACK FROM THE TIMES AND PLACES OF THE REPORTS, THEY LIKELY CAME FROM THE BALSA ISLANDS.
LOTS OF WEIRD COUNTRIES OVER THERE.
NOT LIKE WE CAN TALK.
BUT THEY'RE ANTS, RIGHT?
YOU'D THINK THEY'D STAY NEAR THEIR NEST.
WHY'D THEY COME OUT HERE?
WHO KNOWS?
OO
MAYBE THEY JUST HAPPENED TO WANDER OVER OR WERE ATTRACTED BY THE SMELL OF TRASH?
I DON'T THINK IT'S A COINCIDENCE.
WHOO

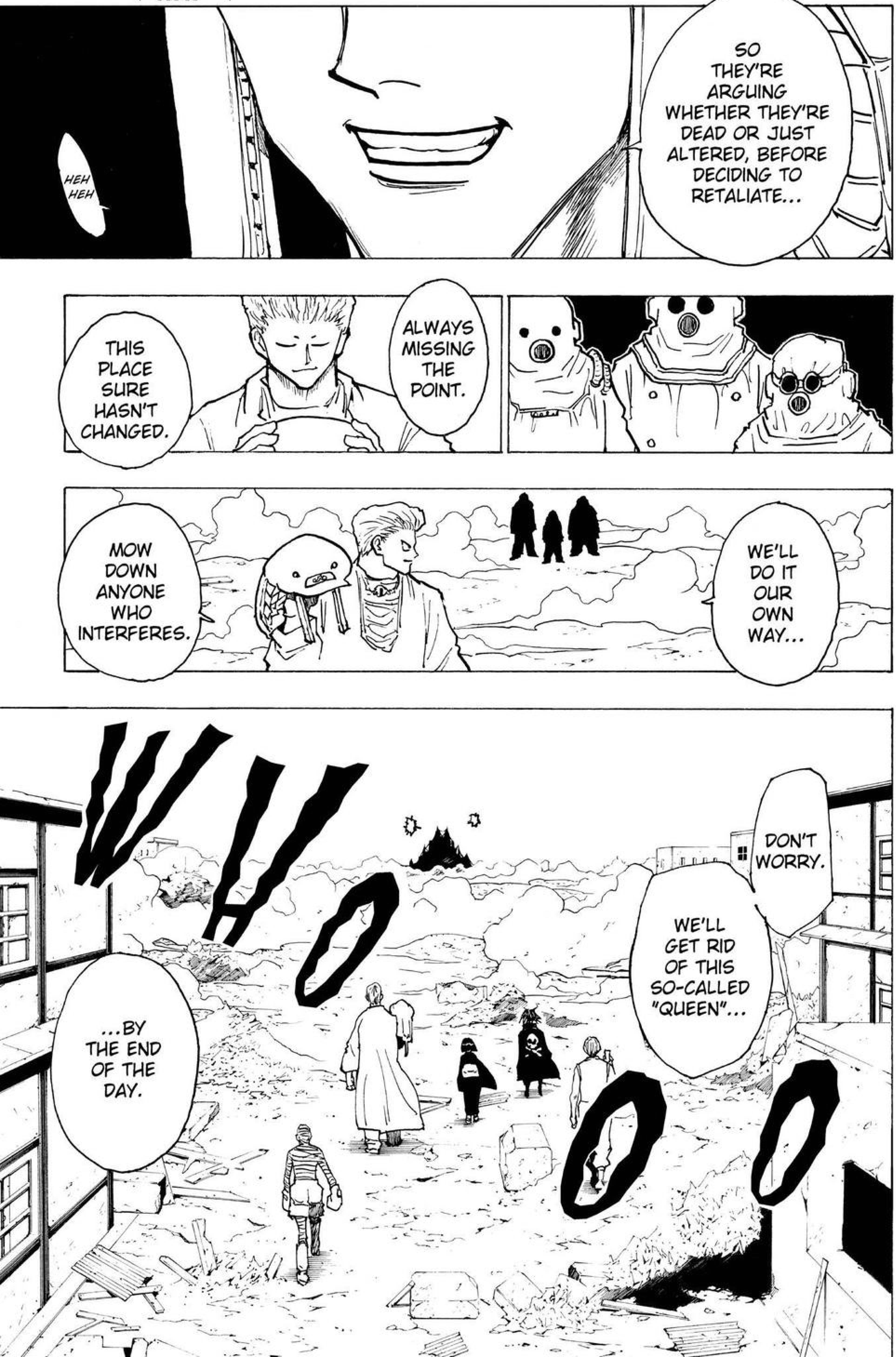

THE NGL AND EAST GORTEAU HAVE ISOLATIONIST POLICIES.
THE CONDITIONS ARE THE SAME HERE.
MAKING IT EASY FOR ANTS TO INVADE?
OOH!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
THIS PLACE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL!

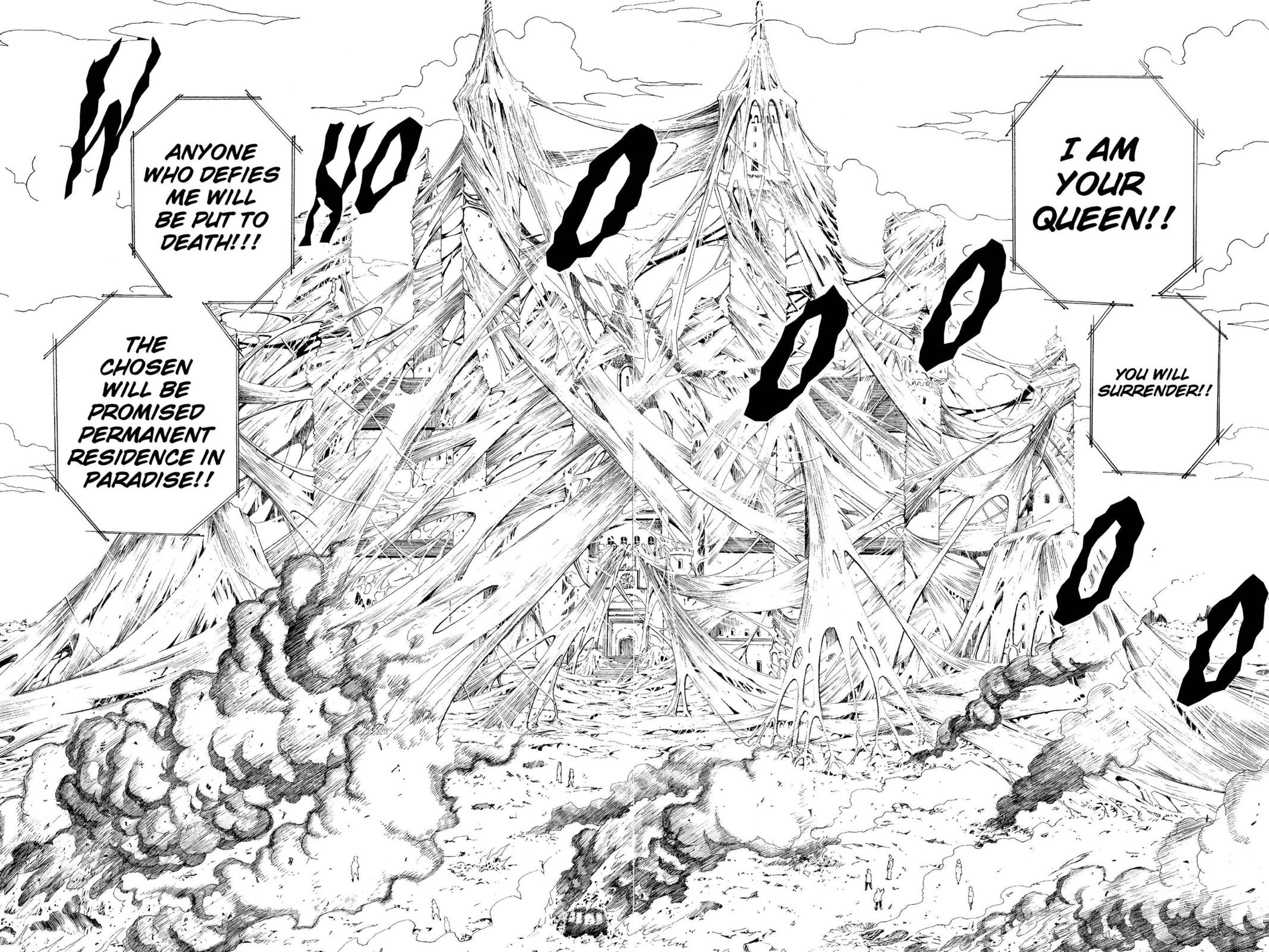
READ THIS WAY

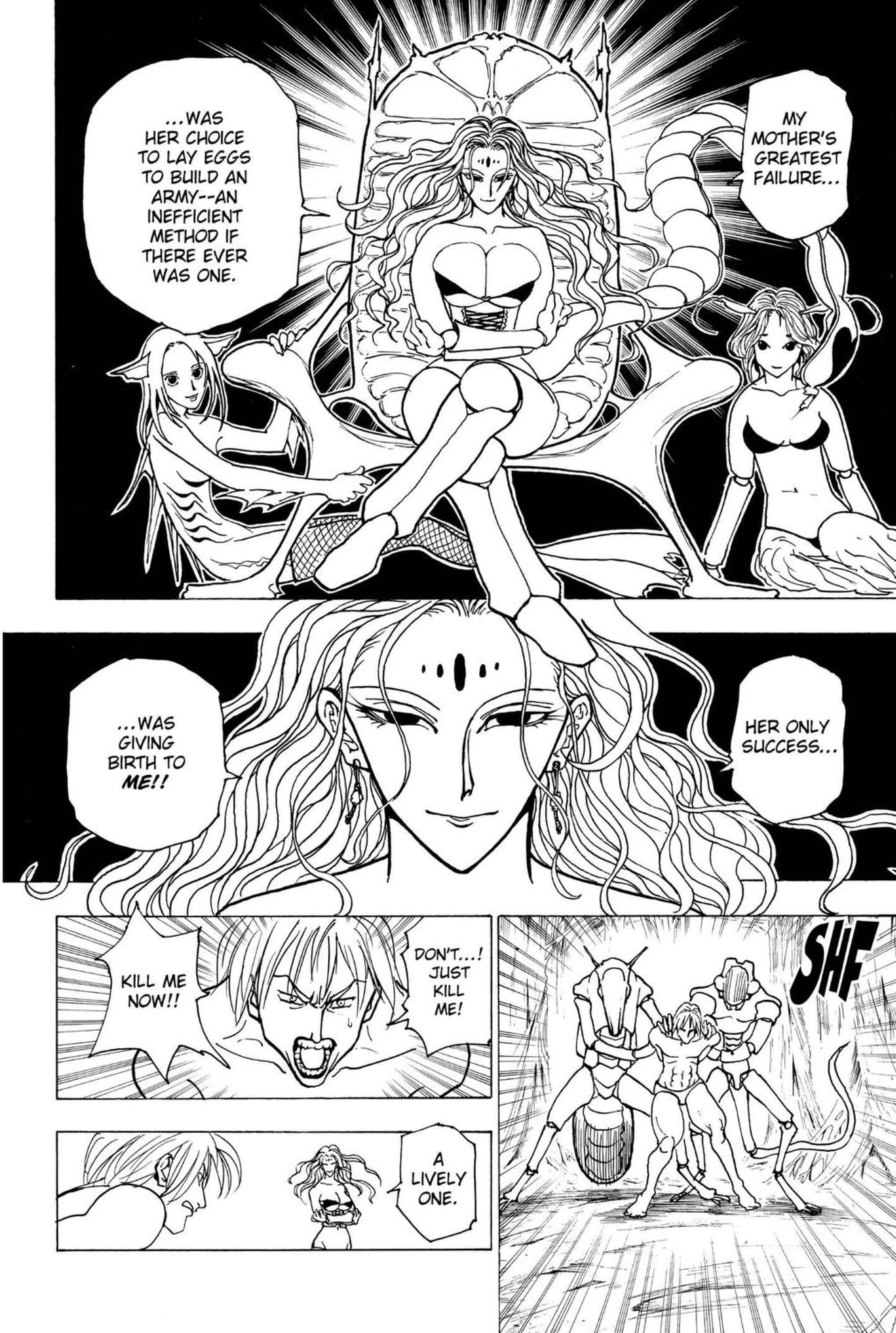

WHAT'S THE STATUS?
OVER 300 DEAD, INCLUDING VICTIMS AND SUICIDE BOMBERS.
BOMBS DON'T WORK, AND WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT ELSE TO DO.
AND THE ASSEMBLY IS DIVIDED OVER THE DEFINITION OF "DEAD."
?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

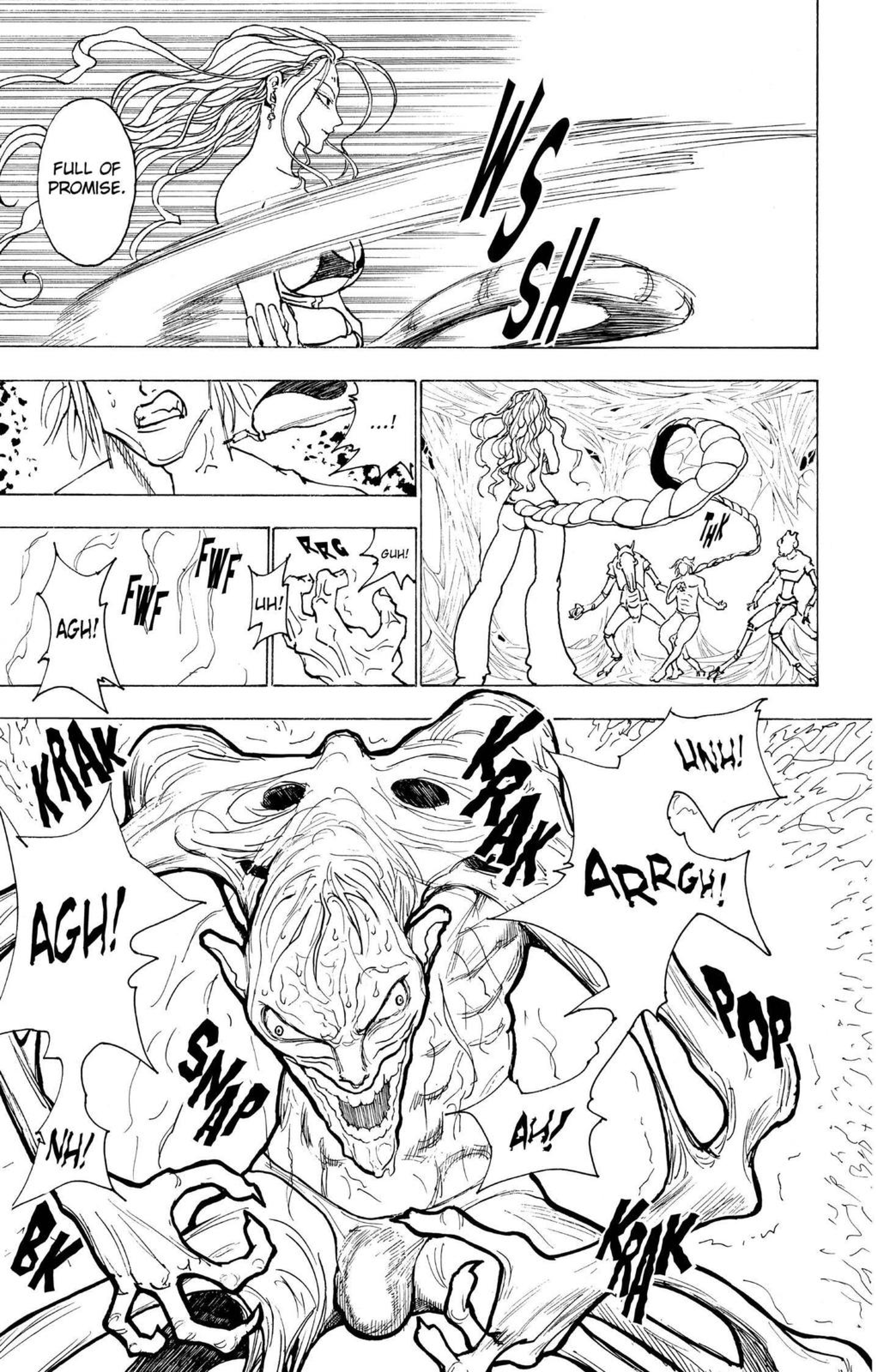

FWAP
!
HE WAS HUMAN JUST THE OTHER DAY.
THE ANTS DID THIS?
HE'S OBVIOUSLY *DEAD.*
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
SOME OF THEM SURVIVE IN THIS TRANSFORMED STATE...
...AND GO OVER TO THEIR SIDE!
IF THERE'S NO WAY TO TURN THEM BACK INTO HUMANS...
MOST OF THE ASSEMBLY WANTS TO MARK THAT POINT AS THE DEFINITION OF "DEATH."

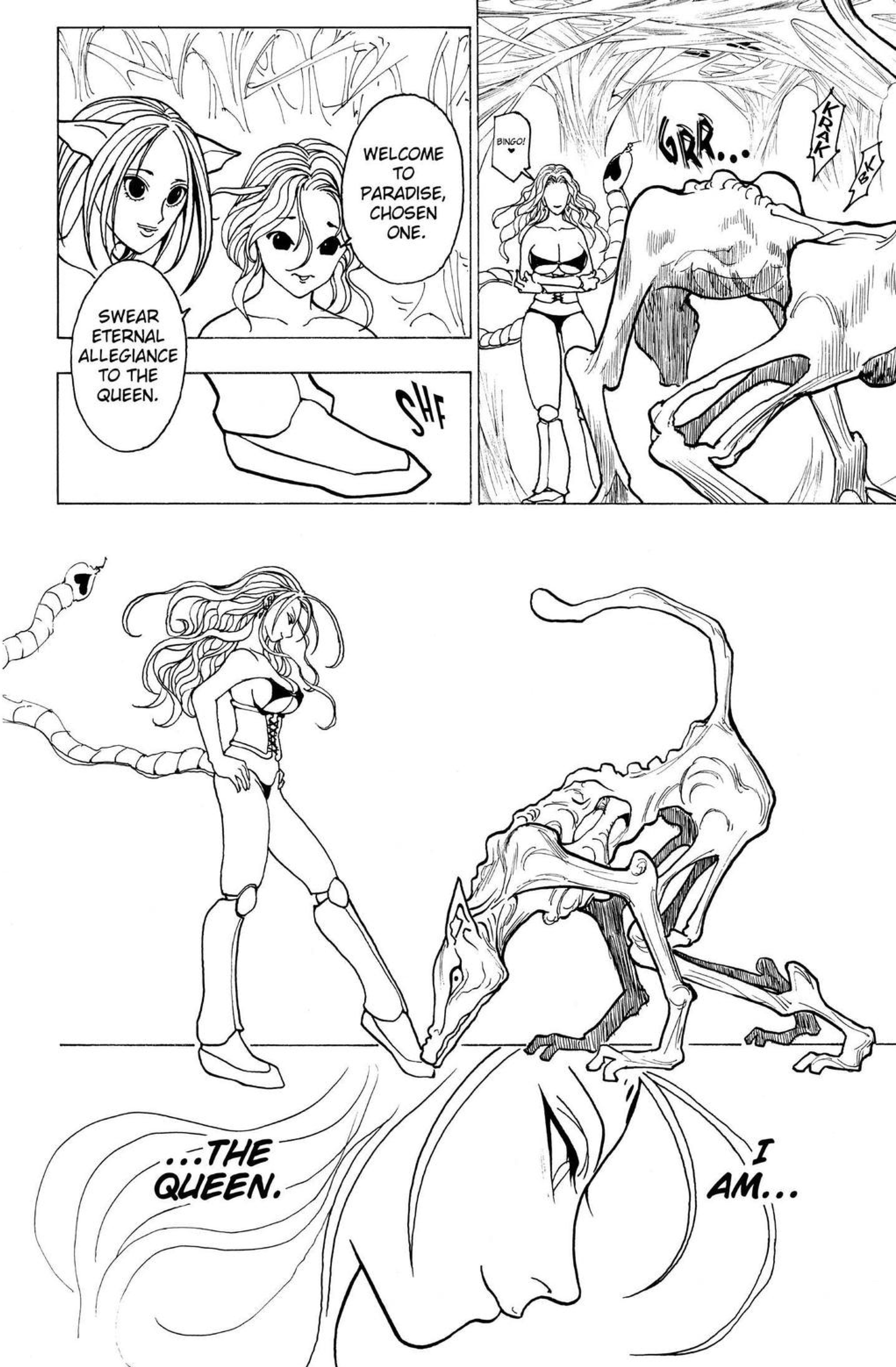
READ THIS WAY

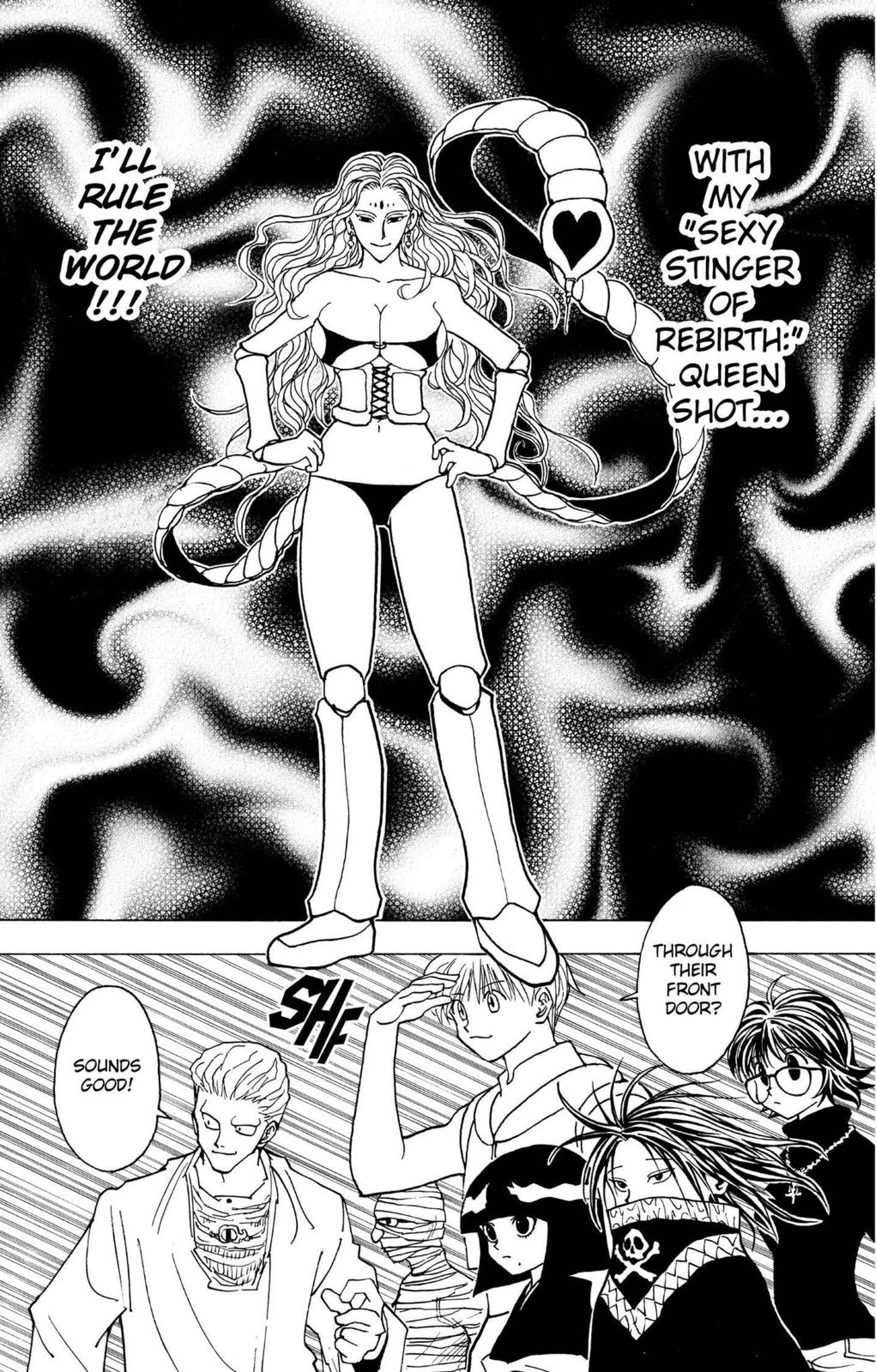

SO THEY'RE ARGUING WHETHER THEY'RE DEAD OR JUST ALTERED, BEFORE DECIDING TO RETALIATE...
HEH HEH
ALWAYS MISSING THE POINT.
THIS PLACE SURE HASN'T CHANGED.
WE'LL DO IT OUR OWN WAY...
MOW DOWN ANYONE WHO INTERFERES.
DON'T WORRY.
WE'LL GET RID OF THIS SO-CALLED "QUEEN"...
...BY THE END OF THE DAY.
WHOOO

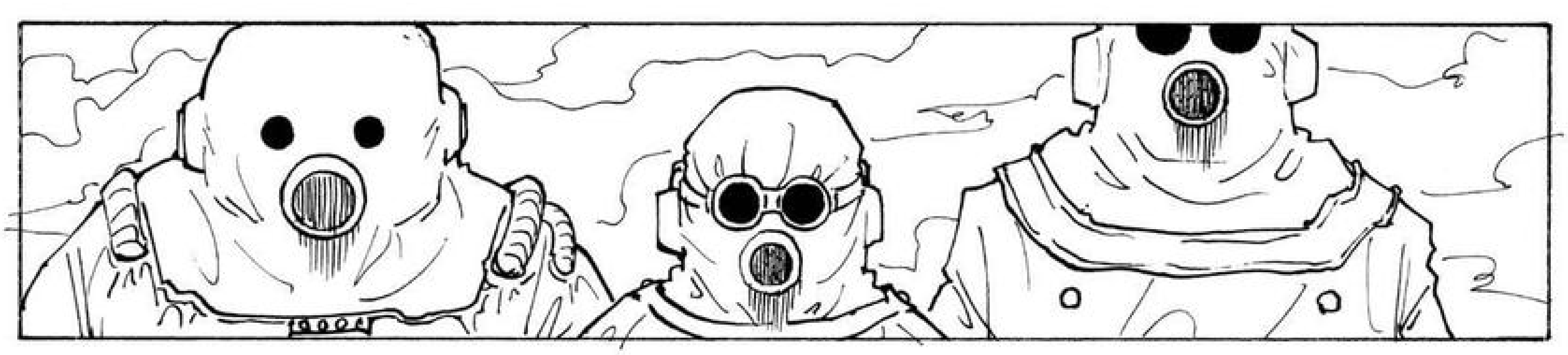

I AM YOUR QUEEN!!
YOU WILL SURRENDER!!
ANYONE WHO DEFIES ME WILL BE PUT TO DEATH!!!
THE CHOSEN WILL BE PROMISED PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN PARADISE!!
WHOOOOOO


MY MOTHER'S GREATEST FAILURE...
...WAS HER CHOICE TO LAY EGGS TO BUILD AN ARMY--AN INEFFICIENT METHOD IF THERE EVER WAS ONE.
HER ONLY SUCCESS...
...WAS GIVING BIRTH TO *ME!!*
SHF
DON'T...! JUST KILL ME!
KILL ME NOW!!
A LIVELY ONE.

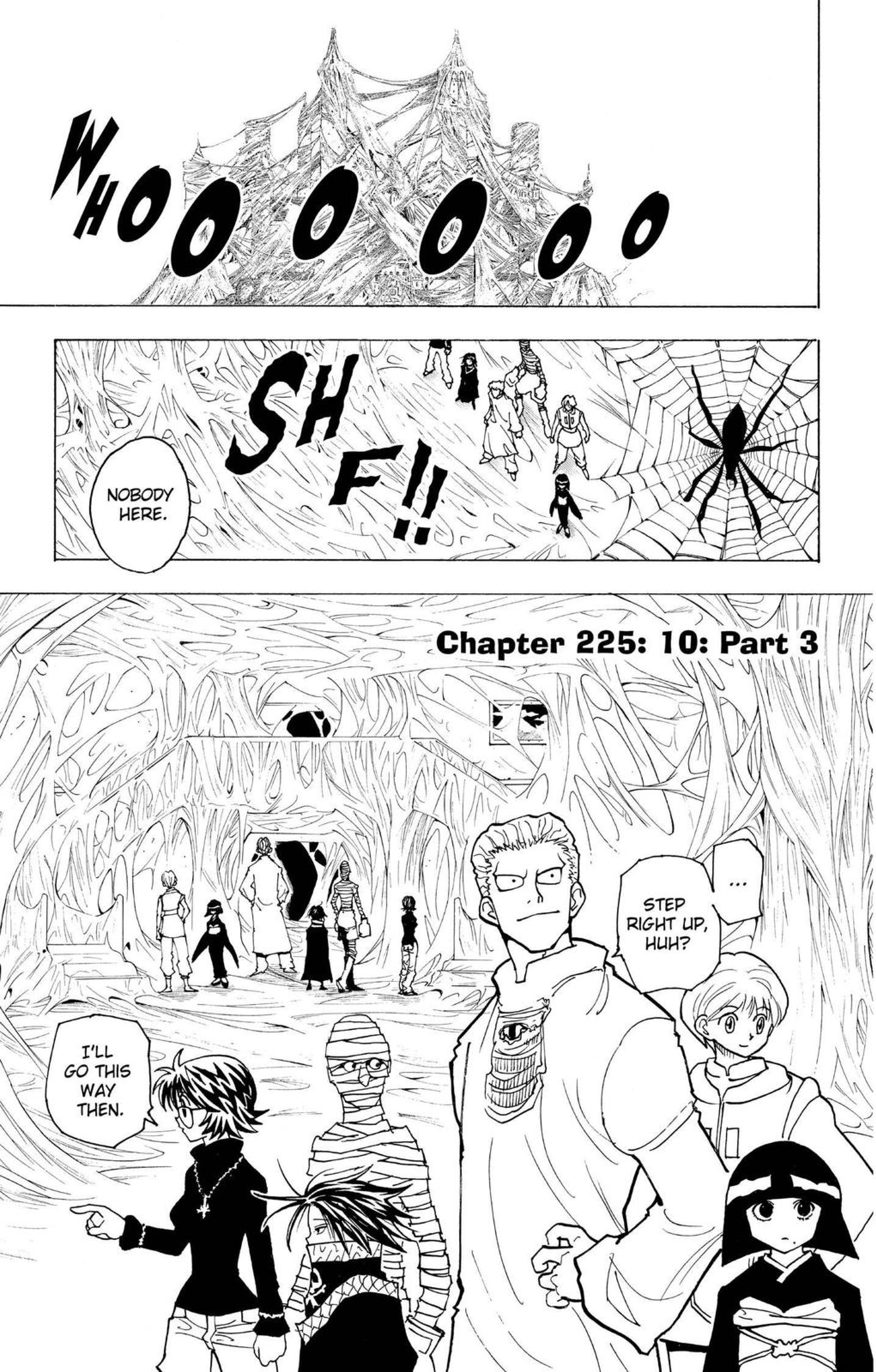

FULL OF PROMISE.
WSSH
THK
...!
GUH!
RRG
UH!
FWF
FWF
AGH!
UNH!
KRAK
ARRGH!
KRAK
AGH!
POP
AH!
SNAP
NH!
KRAK
BK

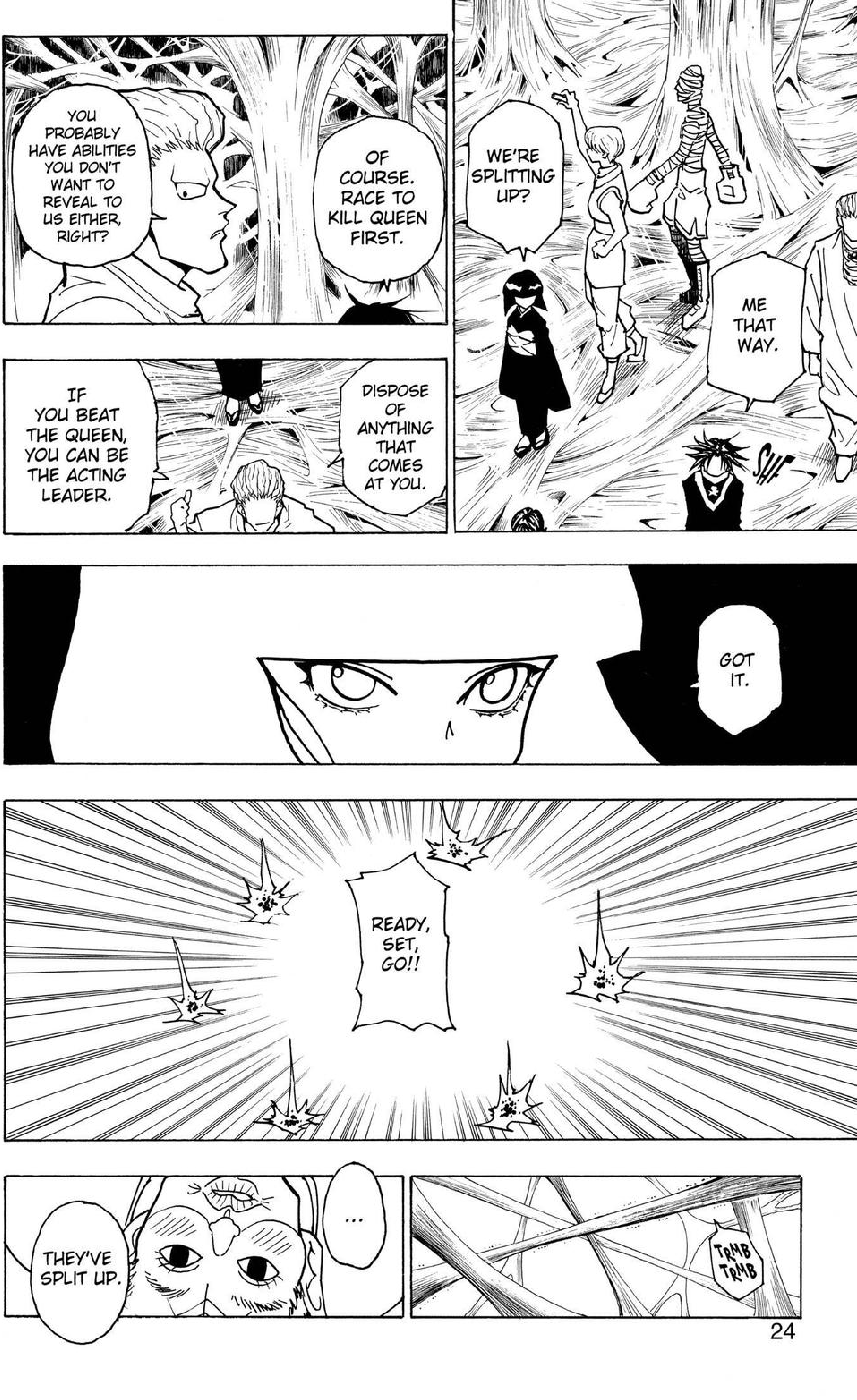

BINGO! ♥
GRR...
KRAK
BK
WELCOME TO PARADISE, CHOSEN ONE.
SWEAR ETERNAL ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN.
SHF
I AM...
...THE QUEEN.

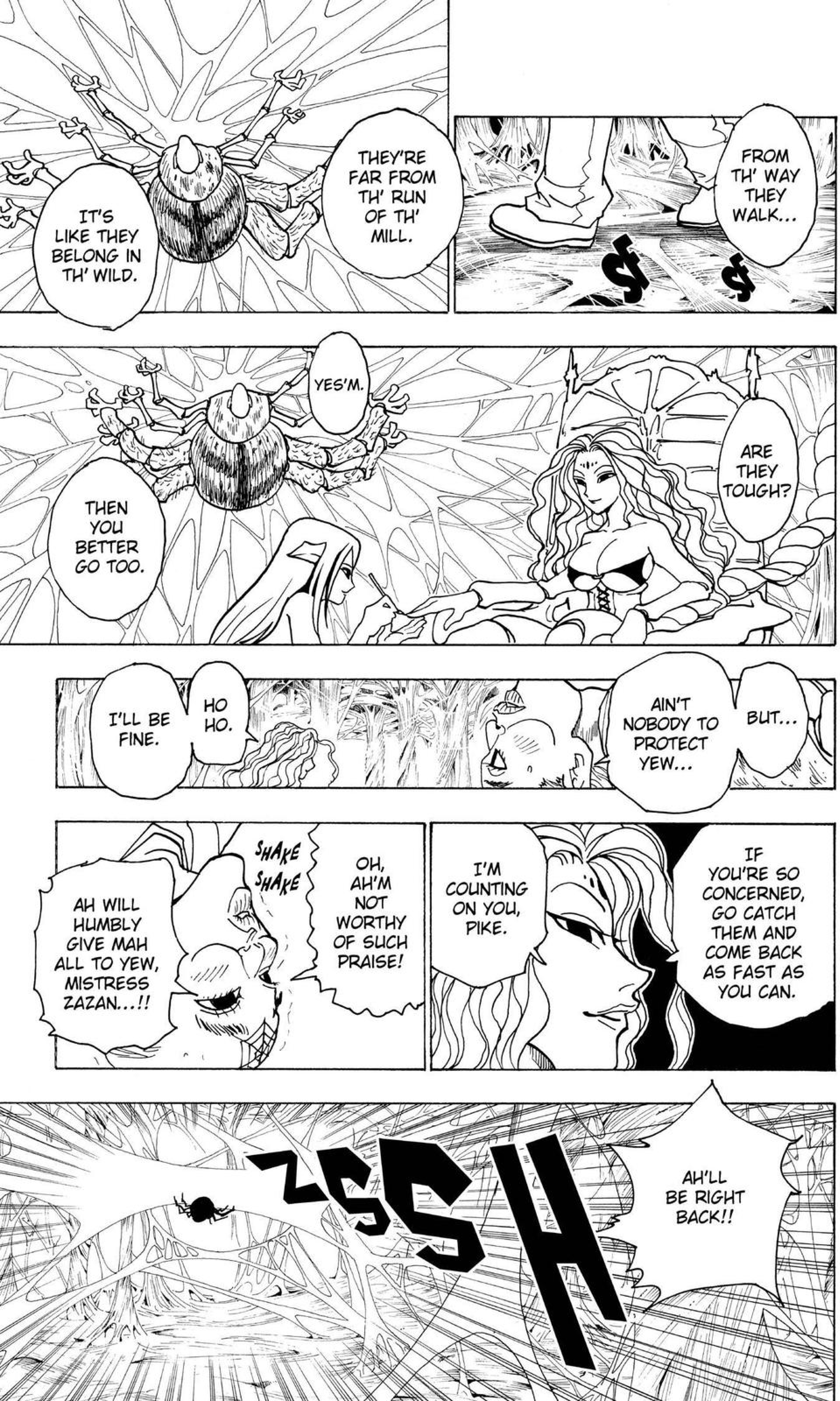

WITH MY "SEXY STINGER OF REBIRTH:" QUEEN SHOT...
I'LL RULE THE WORLD!!!
THROUGH THEIR FRONT DOOR?
SHF
SOUNDS GOOD!

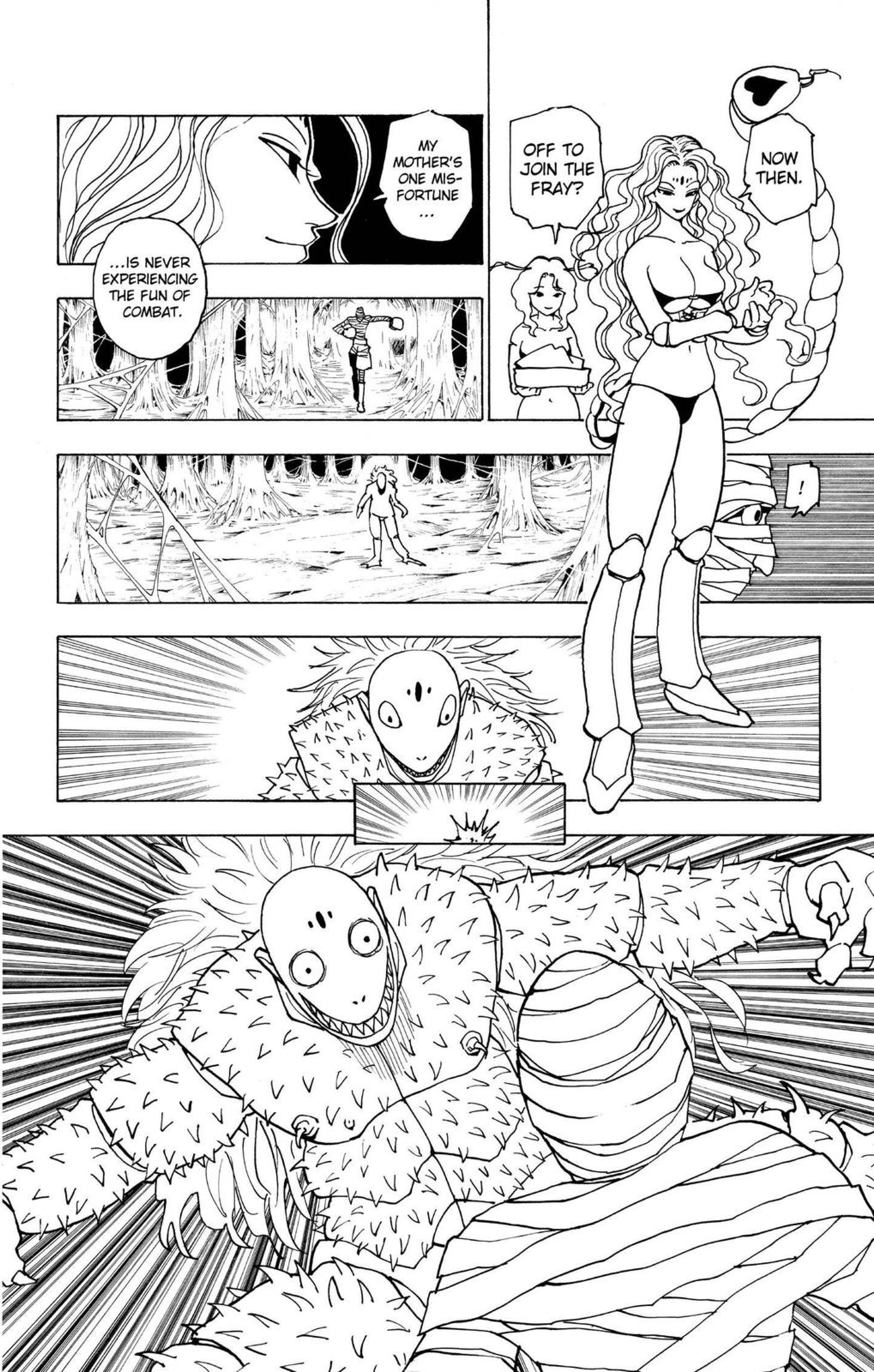


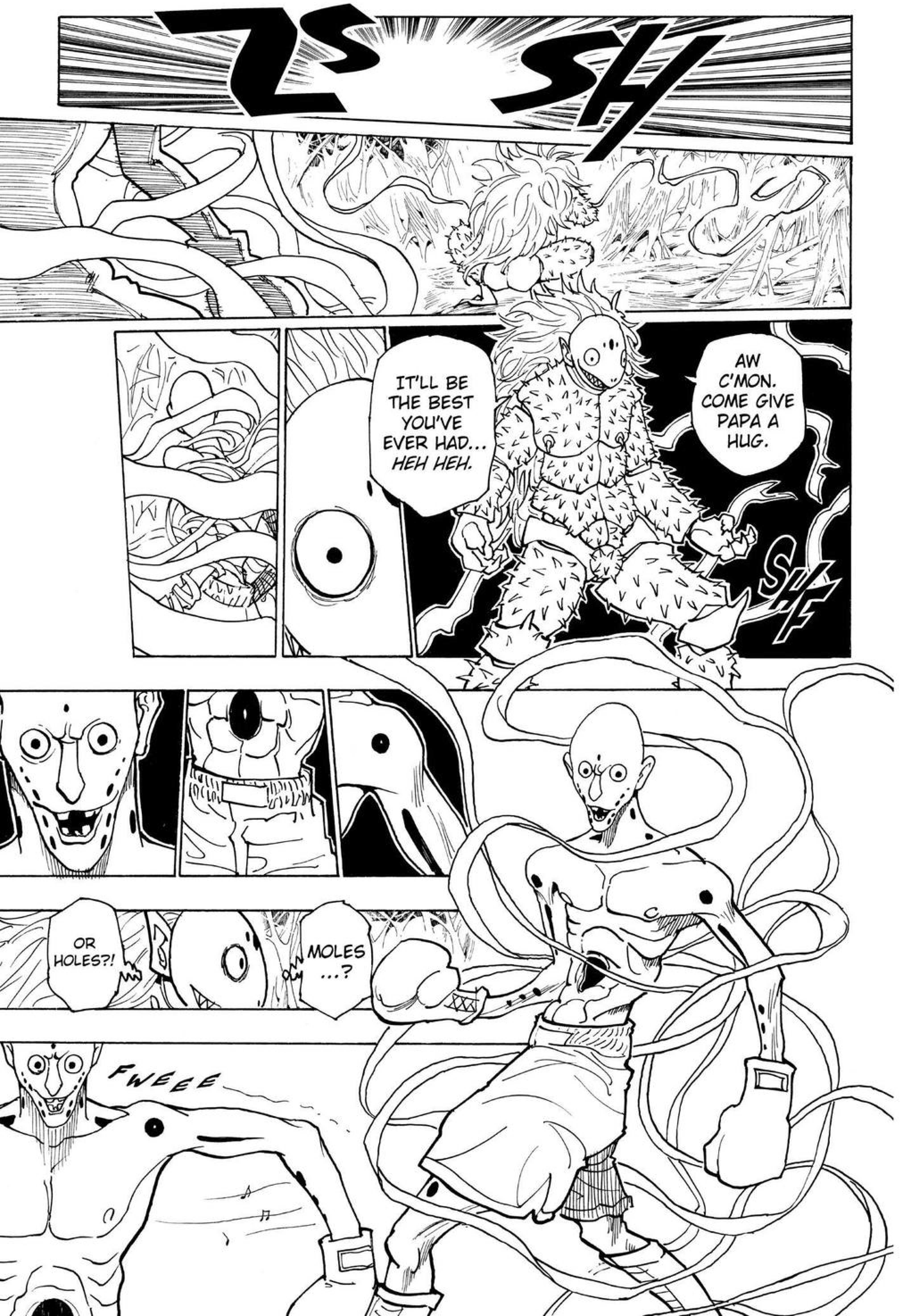
Chapter 225: 10: Part 3

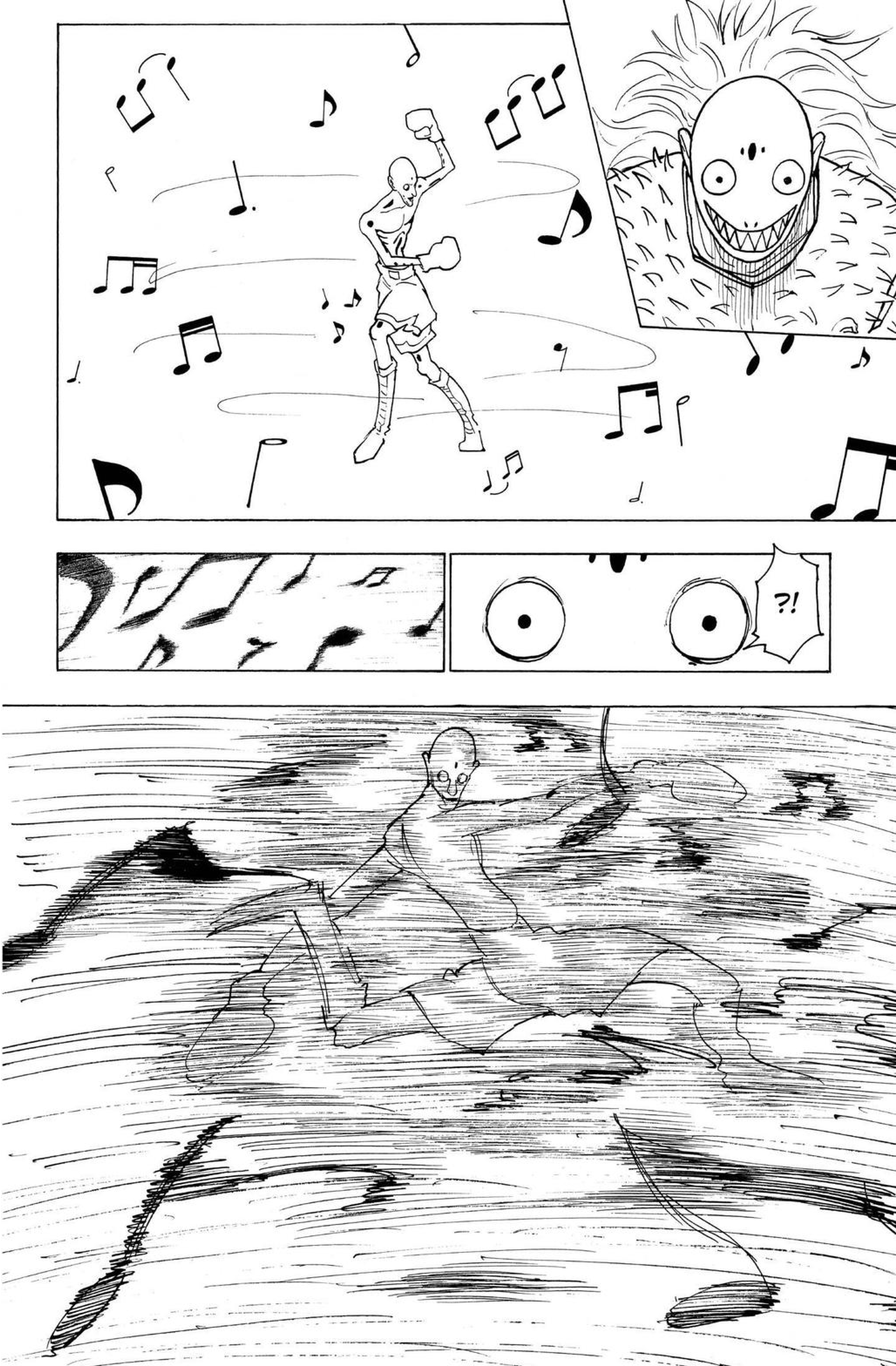

WHOOOOOO
SHF!!
NOBODY HERE.
...
STEP RIGHT UP, HUH?
I'LL GO THIS WAY THEN.

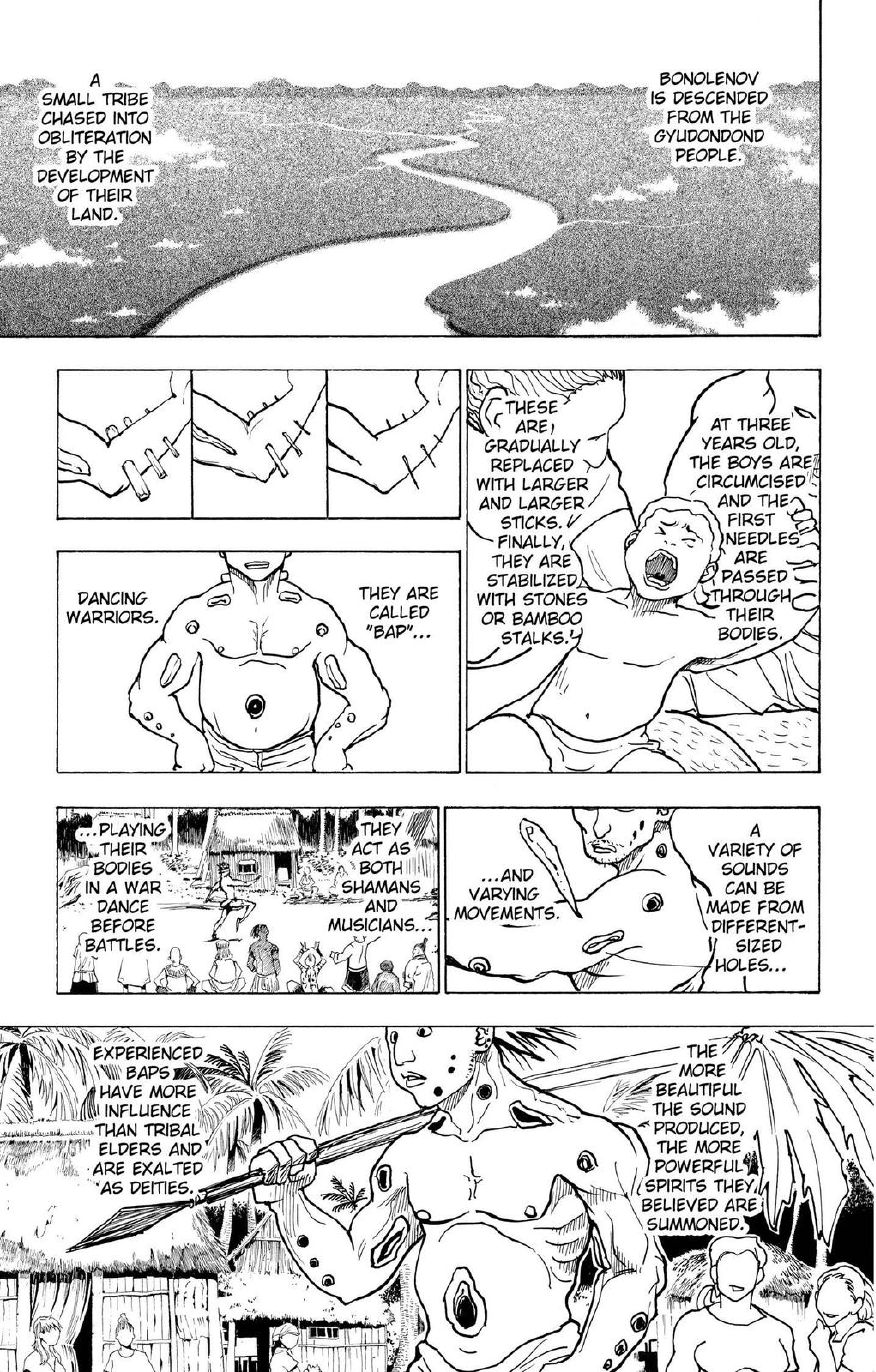

WE'RE SPLITTING UP?
ME THAT WAY.
SHF
OF COURSE. RACE TO KILL QUEEN FIRST.
YOU PROBABLY HAVE ABILITIES YOU DON'T WANT TO REVEAL TO US EITHER, RIGHT?
DISPOSE OF ANYTHING THAT COMES AT YOU.
IF YOU BEAT THE QUEEN, YOU CAN BE THE ACTING LEADER.
GOT IT.
READY, SET, GO!!
TRMB TRMB
...
THEY'VE SPLIT UP.

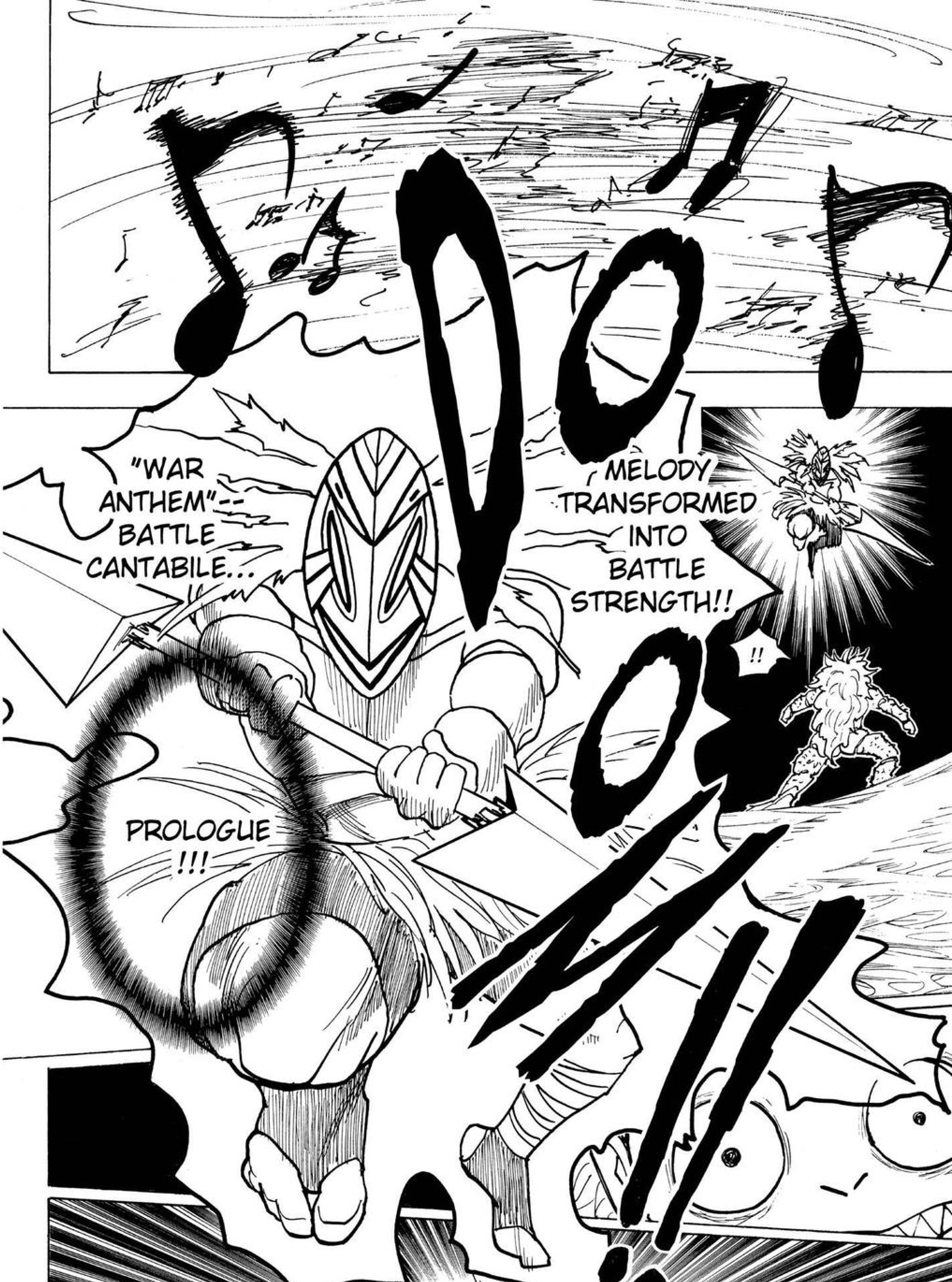

FROM TH' WAY THEY WALK...
SF
SF
THEY'RE FAR FROM TH' RUN OF TH' MILL.
IT'S LIKE THEY BELONG IN TH' WILD.
ARE THEY TOUGH?
YES'M.
THEN YOU BETTER GO TOO.
BUT...
AIN'T NOBODY TO PROTECT YEW...
HO HO.
I'LL BE FINE.
IF YOU'RE SO CONCERNED, GO CATCH THEM AND COME BACK AS FAST AS YOU CAN.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, PIKE.
OH, AH'M NOT WORTHY OF SUCH PRAISE!
SHAKE SHAKE
AH WILL HUMBLY GIVE MAH ALL TO YEW, MISTRESS ZAZAN...!!
AH'LL BE RIGHT BACK!!
ZSSH

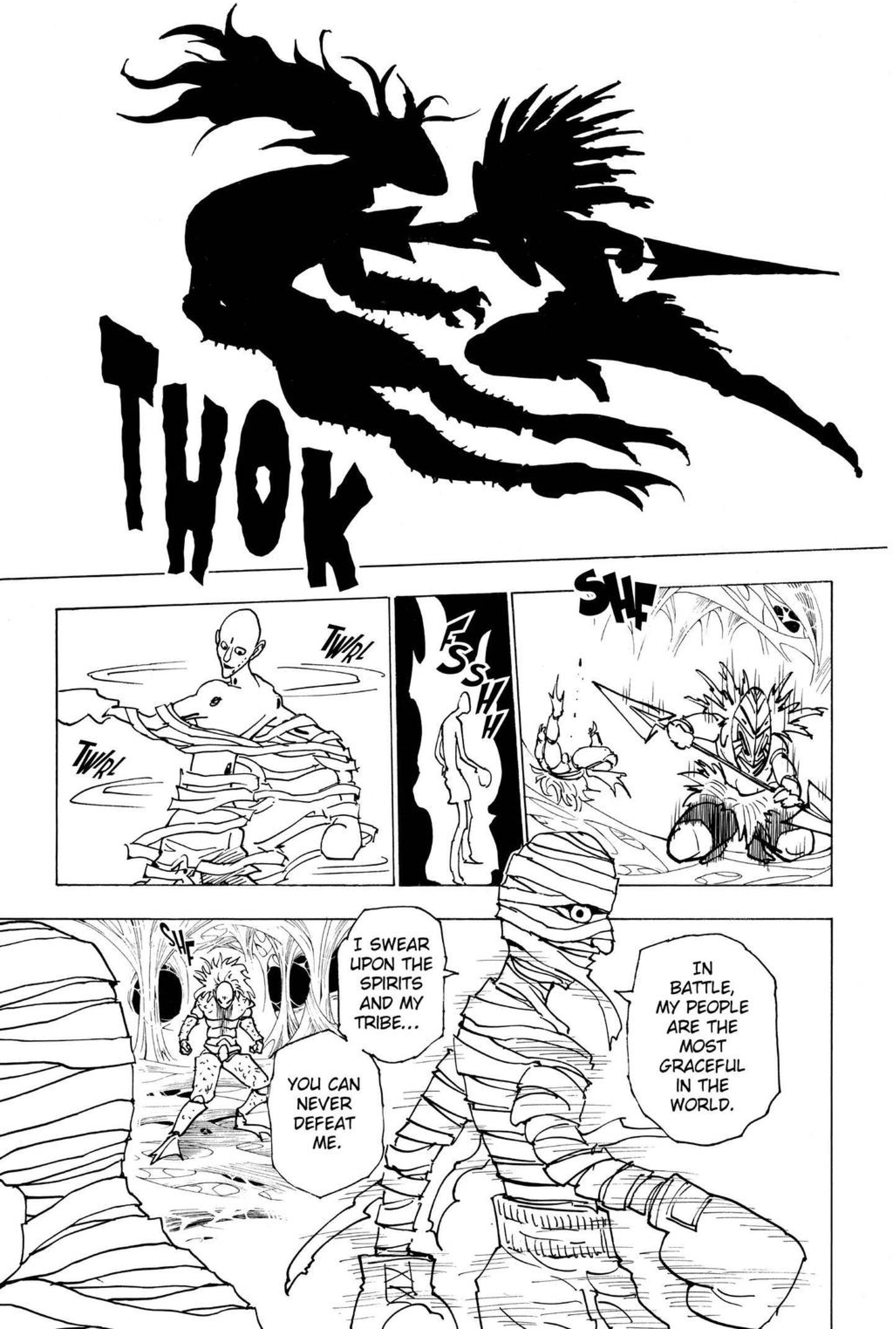

NOW THEN.
OFF TO JOIN THE FRAY?
MY MOTHER'S ONE MISFORTUNE …
…IS NEVER EXPERIENCING THE FUN OF COMBAT.
!

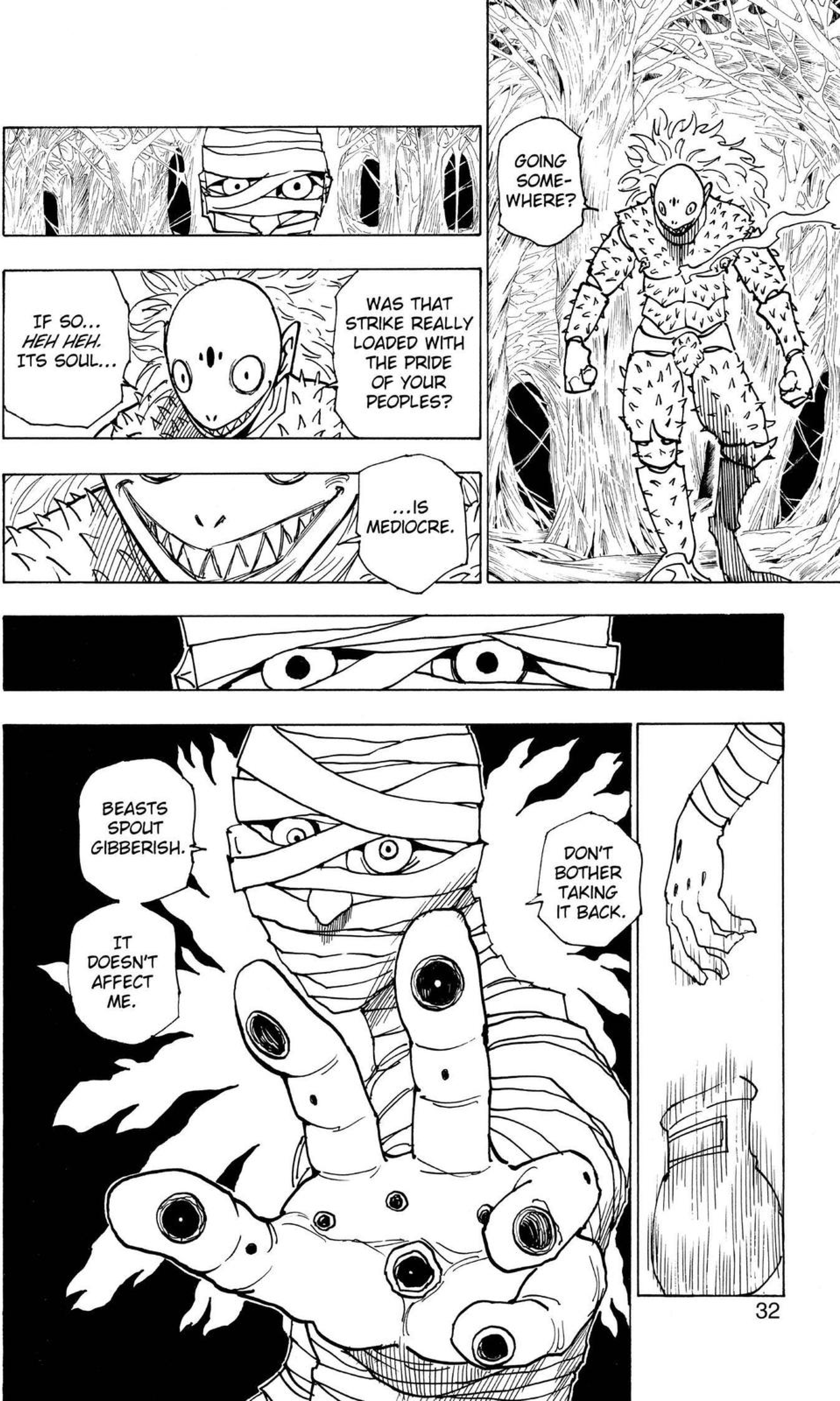

ZS
SH
AW C'MON. COME GIVE PAPA A HUG.
SHF
IT'LL BE THE BEST YOU'VE EVER HAD... *HEH HEH.*
MOLES ...?
OR HOLES?!
FWEEE

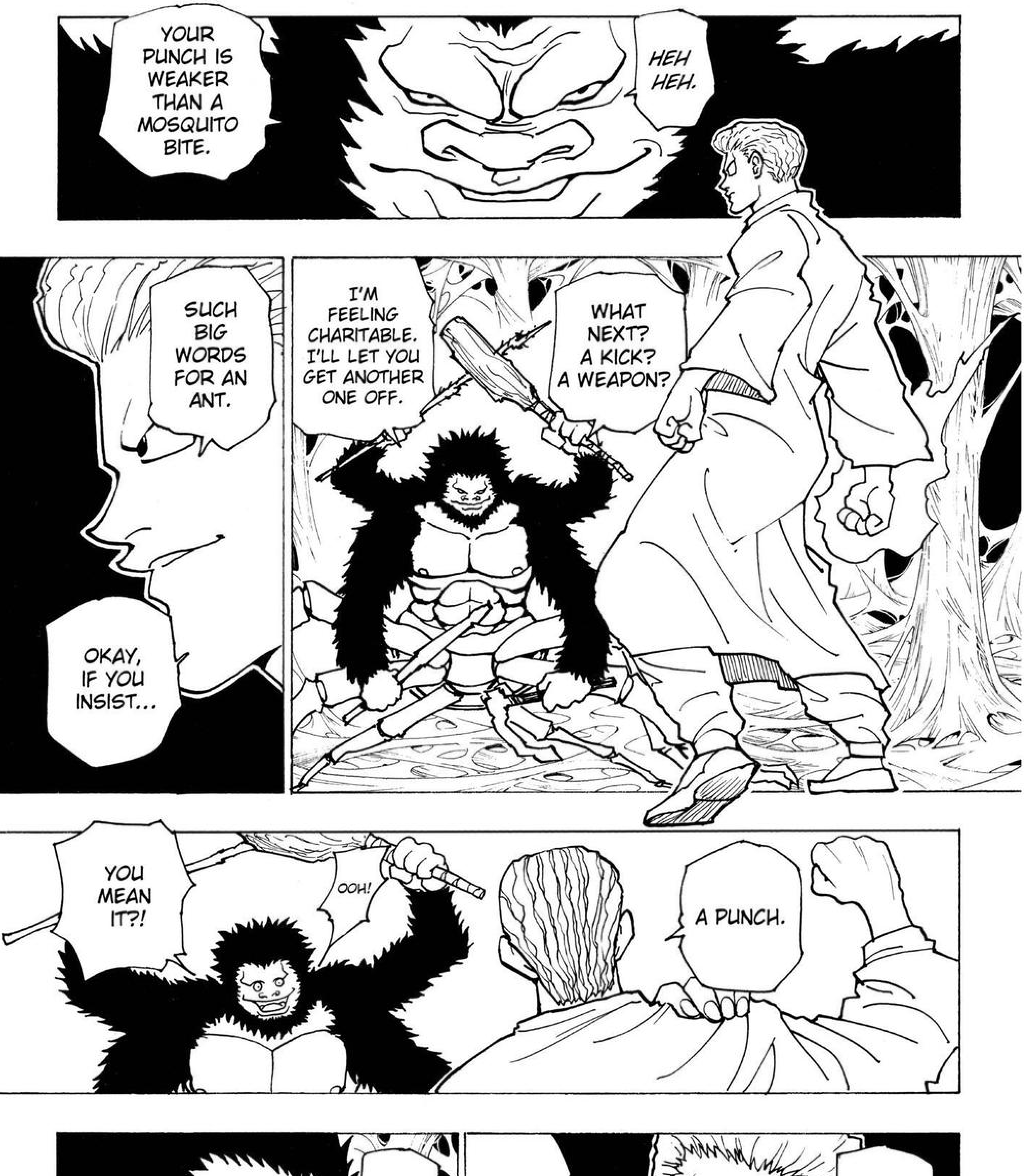


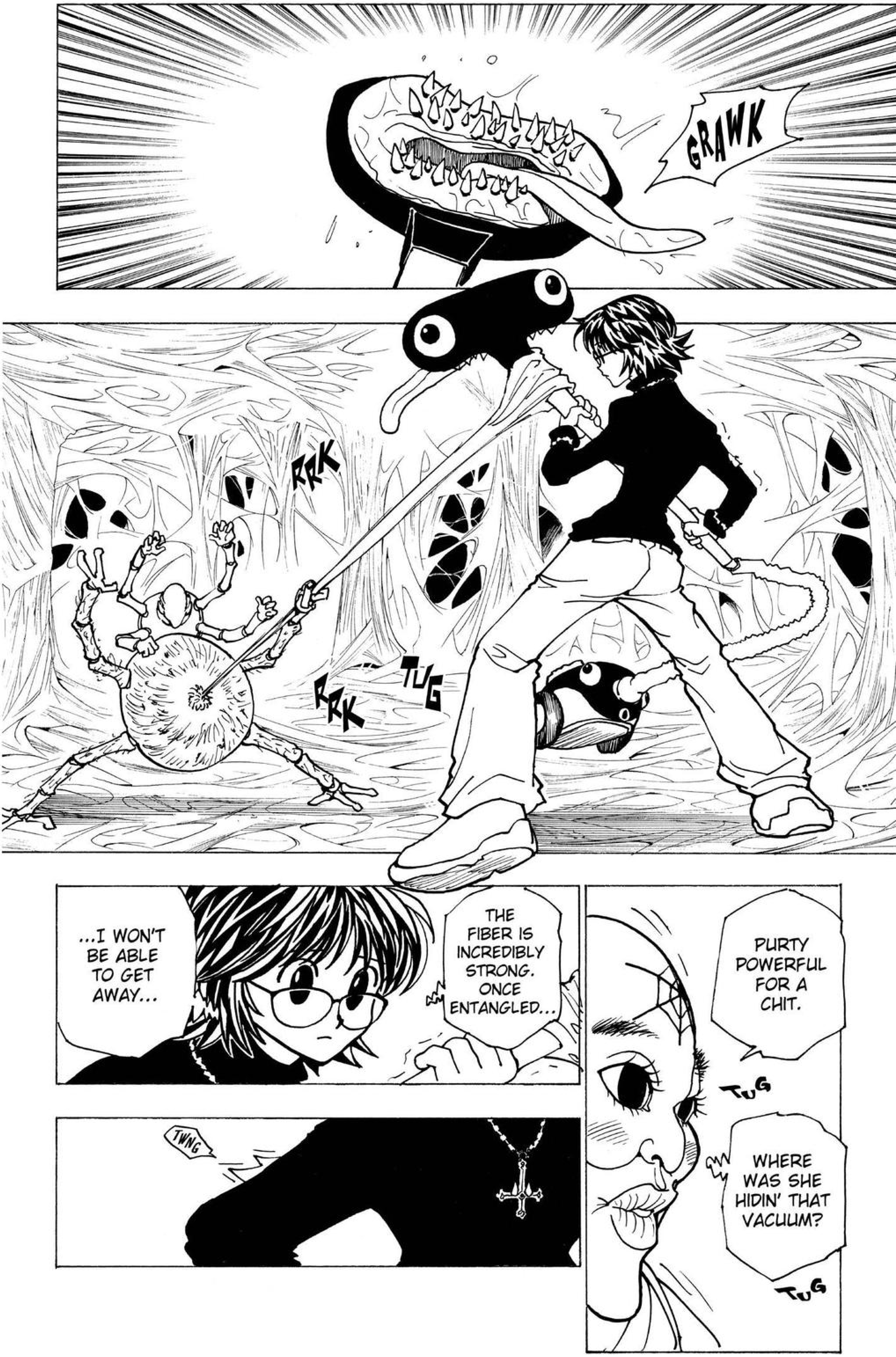

BONOLENOV IS DESCENDED FROM THE GYUDONDOND PEOPLE.
A SMALL TRIBE CHASED INTO OBLITERATION BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR LAND.
AT THREE YEARS OLD, THE BOYS ARE CIRCUMCISED AND THE FIRST NEEDLES ARE PASSED THROUGH THEIR BODIES.
THESE ARE GRADUALLY REPLACED WITH LARGER AND LARGER STICKS.
FINALLY, THEY ARE STABILIZED WITH STONES OR BAMBOO STALKS.
THEY ARE CALLED "BAP"...
DANCING WARRIORS.
A VARIETY OF SOUNDS CAN BE MADE FROM DIFFERENT-SIZED HOLES...
...AND VARYING MOVEMENTS.
THEY ACT AS BOTH SHAMANS AND MUSICIANS...
...PLAYING THEIR BODIES IN A WAR DANCE BEFORE BATTLES.
THE MORE BEAUTIFUL THE SOUND PRODUCED, THE MORE POWERFUL SPIRITS THEY BELIEVED ARE SUMMONED.
EXPERIENCED BAPS HAVE MORE INFLUENCE THAN TRIBAL ELDERS AND ARE EXALTED AS DEITIES.

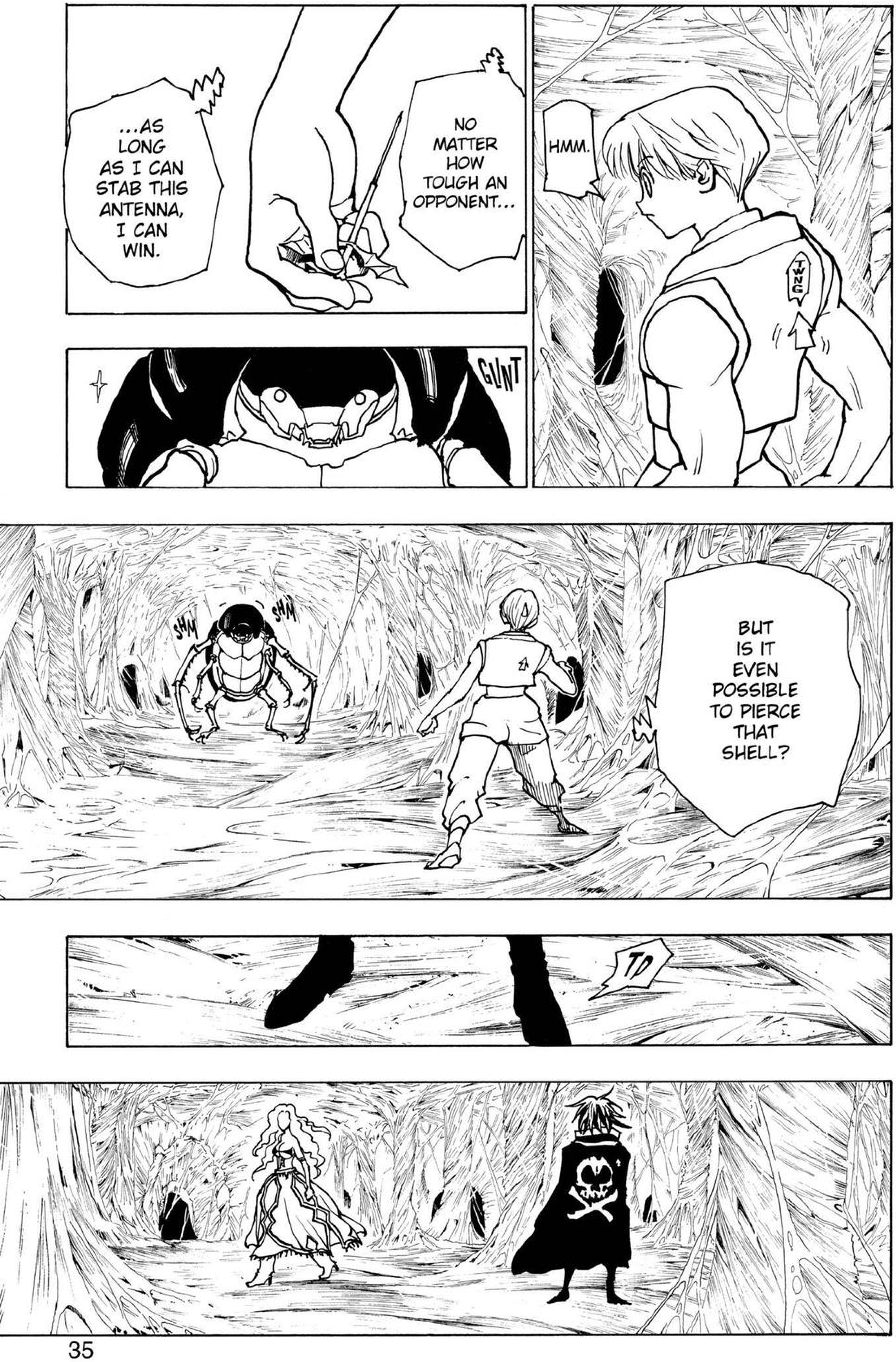

DOOM!!
MELODY TRANSFORMED INTO BATTLE STRENGTH!!
"WAR ANTHEM"-- BATTLE CANTABILE...!!
!!
PROLOGUE!!!

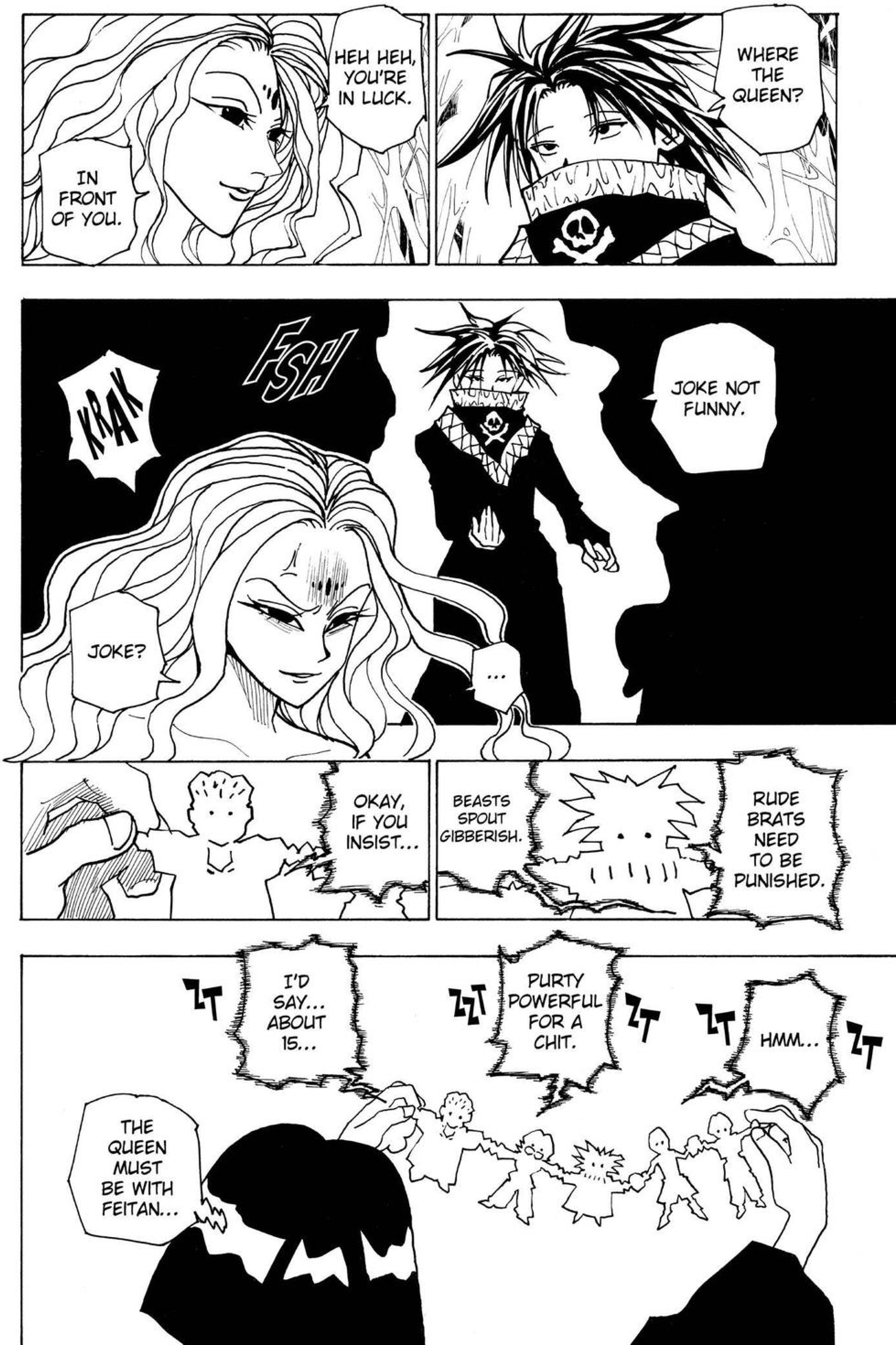

THOK
SHF
FSSHH
TWRL
TWRL
IN BATTLE, MY PEOPLE ARE THE MOST GRACEFUL IN THE WORLD.
I SWEAR UPON THE SPIRITS AND MY TRIBE...
YOU CAN NEVER DEFEAT ME.
SHF

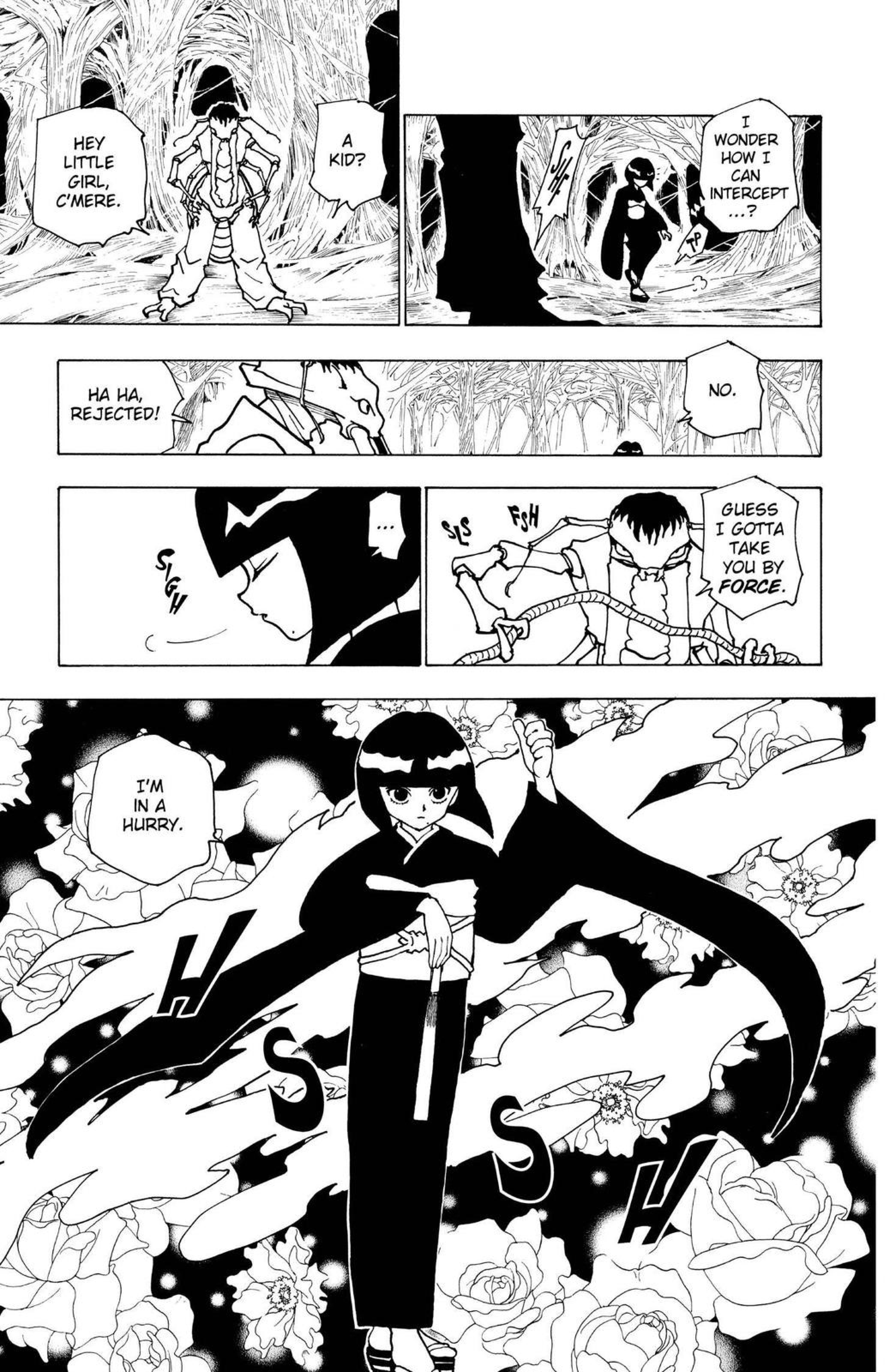

GOING SOME-WHERE?
WAS THAT STRIKE REALLY LOADED WITH THE PRIDE OF YOUR PEOPLES?
IF SO... *HEH HEH.* ITS SOUL...
...IS MEDIOCRE.
DON'T BOTHER TAKING IT BACK.
BEASTS SPOUT GIBBERISH.
IT DOESN'T AFFECT ME.

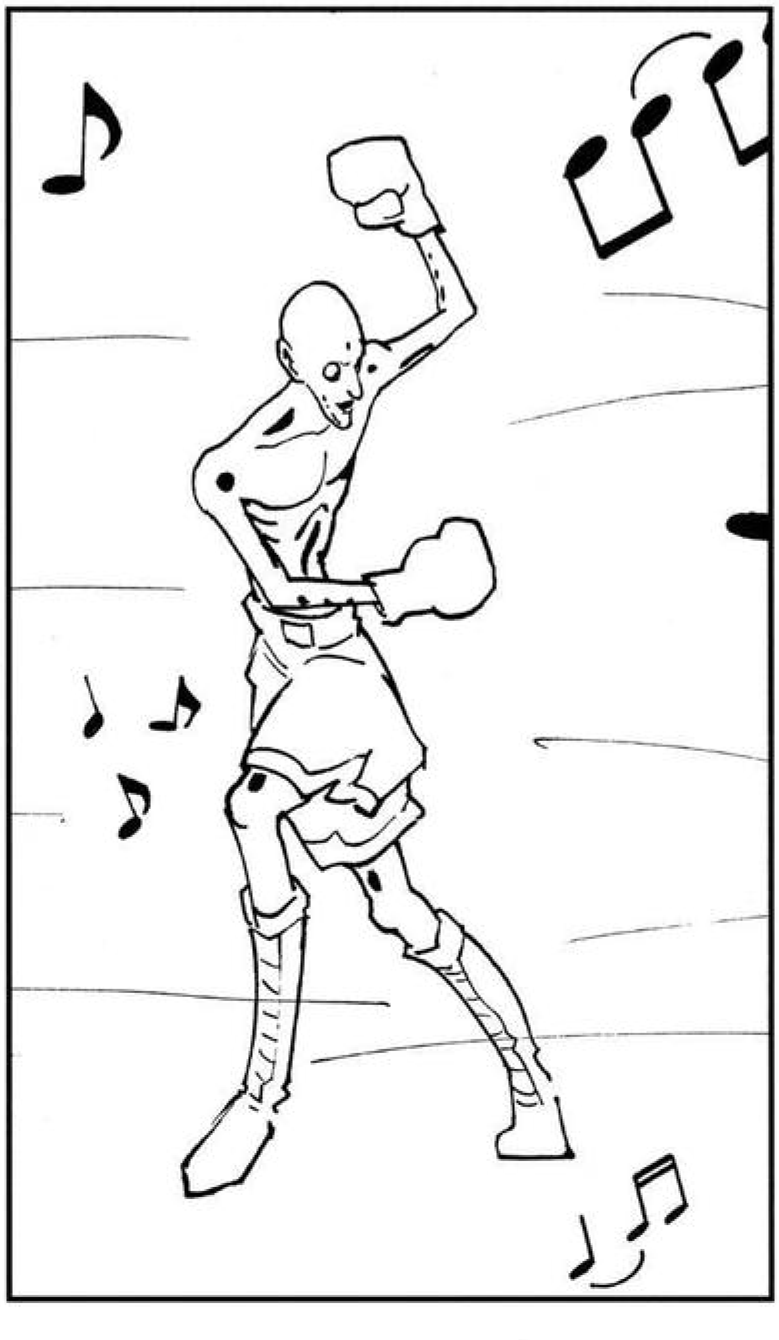

HEH HEH.
YOUR PUNCH IS WEAKER THAN A MOSQUITO BITE.
WHAT NEXT? A KICK? A WEAPON?
I'M FEELING CHARITABLE. I'LL LET YOU GET ANOTHER ONE OFF.
SUCH BIG WORDS FOR AN ANT.
OKAY, IF YOU INSIST...
A PUNCH.
OOH!
YOU MEAN IT?!
I'D SAY...
...ABOUT 15.
?


GRAWK
TUG
RRK
RRK
PURTY POWERFUL FOR A CHIT.
TUG
WHERE WAS SHE HIDIN' THAT VACUUM?
TUG
THE FIBER IS INCREDIBLY STRONG. ONCE ENTANGLED…
…I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET AWAY…
TWNG

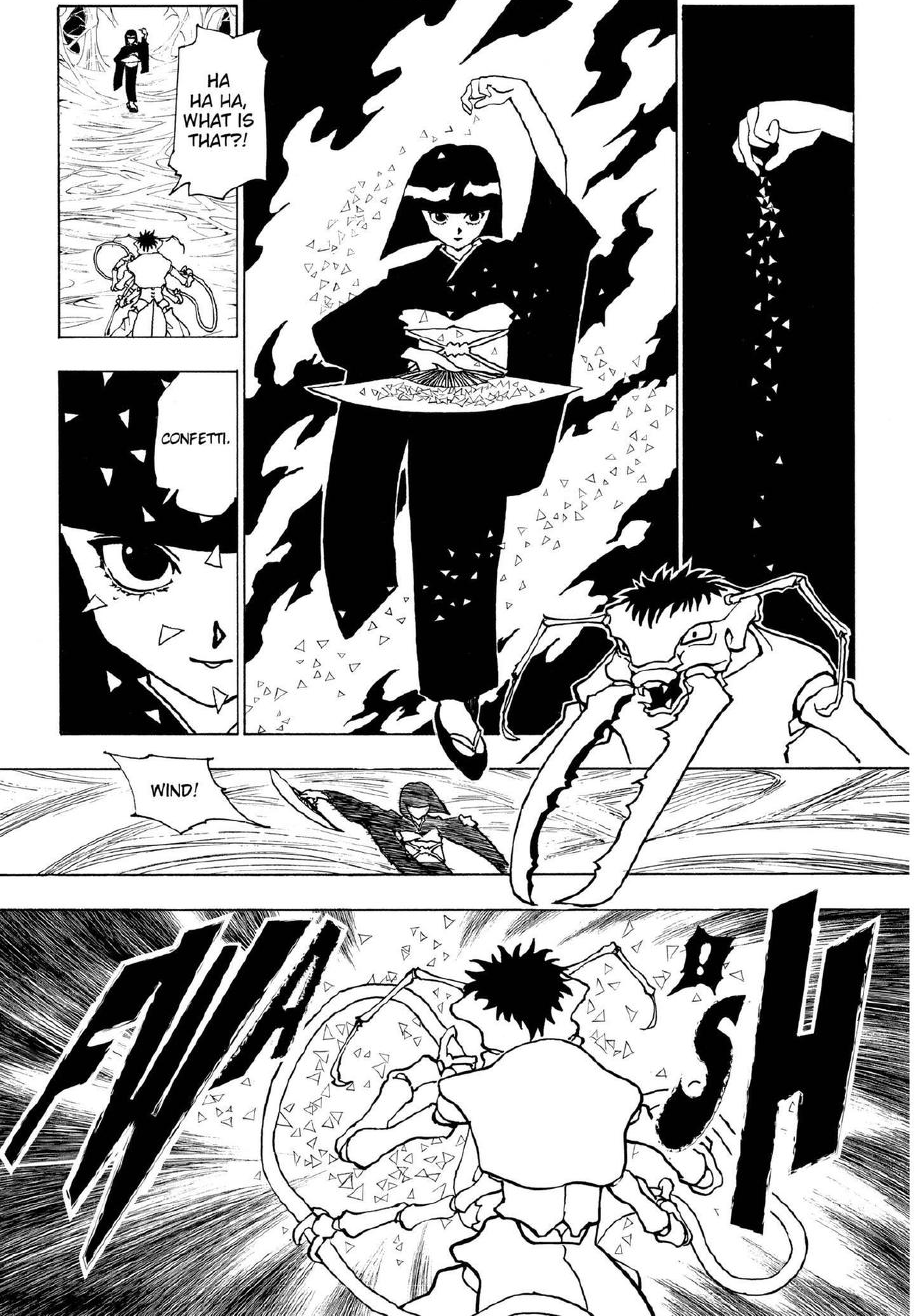

HMM.
TWNG
NO MATTER HOW TOUGH AN OPPONENT...
...AS LONG AS I CAN STAB THIS ANTENNA, I CAN WIN.
GLINT
SHM
SHM
BUT IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE TO PIERCE THAT SHELL?
TD

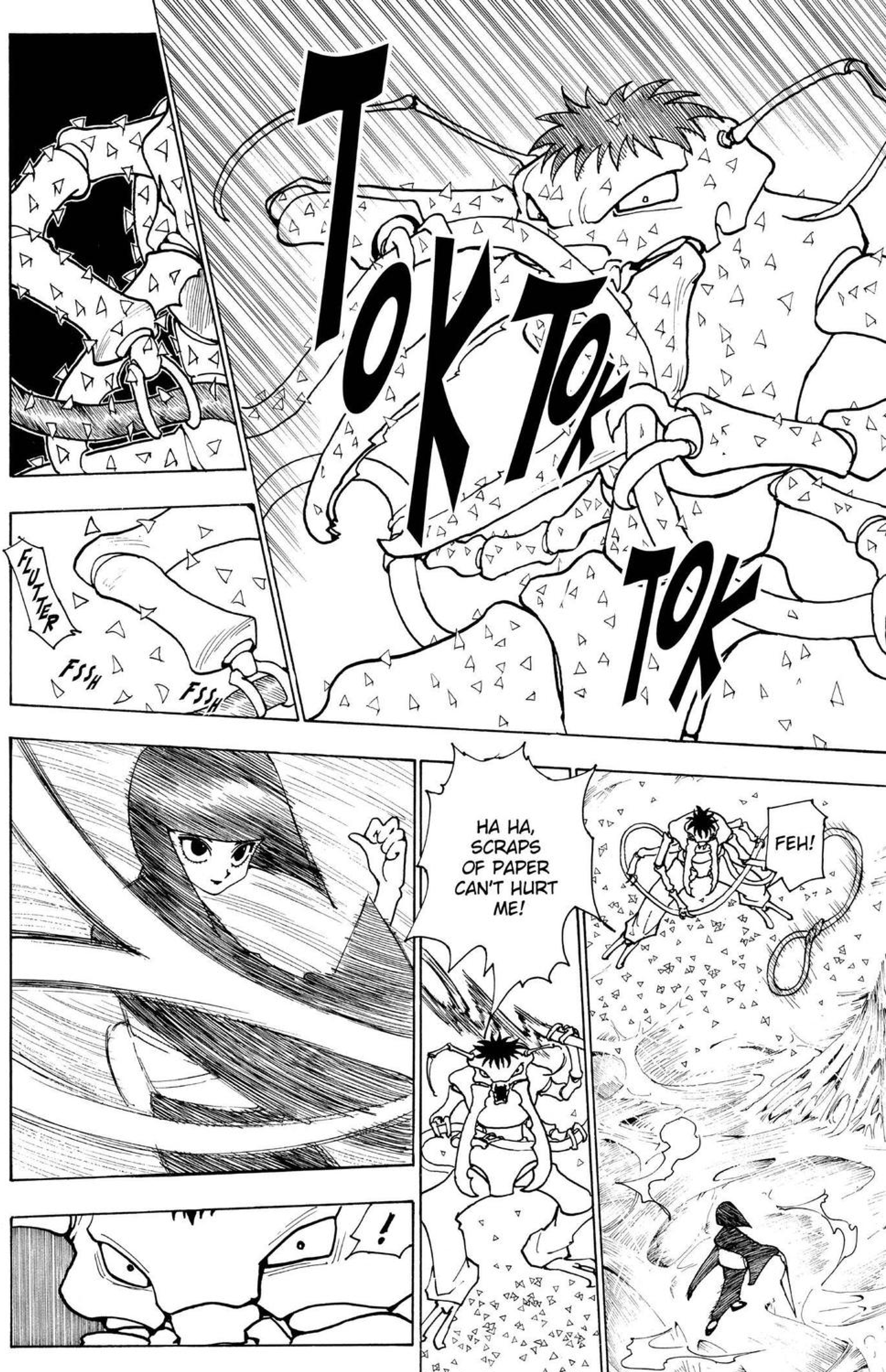

WHERE THE QUEEN?
HEH HEH, YOU'RE IN LUCK.
IN FRONT OF YOU.
JOKE NOT FUNNY.
FSH
KRAK
...
JOKE?
RUDE BRATS NEED TO BE PUNISHED.
BEASTS SPOUT GIBBERISH.
OKAY, IF YOU INSIST...
ZT
HMM...
ZT
ZT
PURTY POWERFUL FOR A CHIT.
ZZT
I'D SAY... ABOUT 15...
ZT
THE QUEEN MUST BE WITH FEITAN...

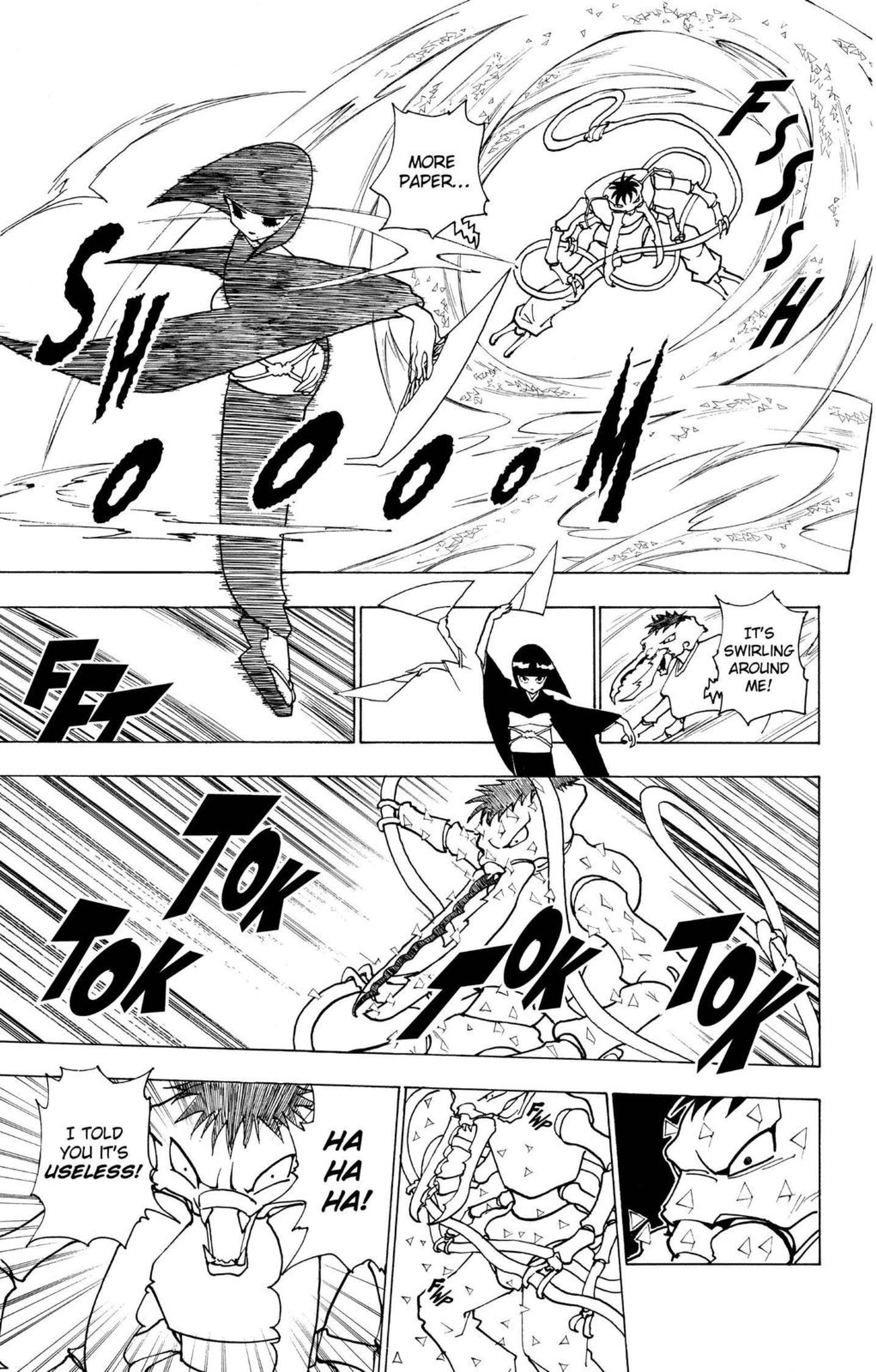

A KID?
HEY LITTLE GIRL, C'MERE.
SHF
I WONDER HOW I CAN INTERCEPT ...?
TP
HA HA, REJECTED!
NO.
SIGH
...
SLS
FSH
GUESS I GOTTA TAKE YOU BY **FORCE**.
I'M IN A HURRY.
HSSSH

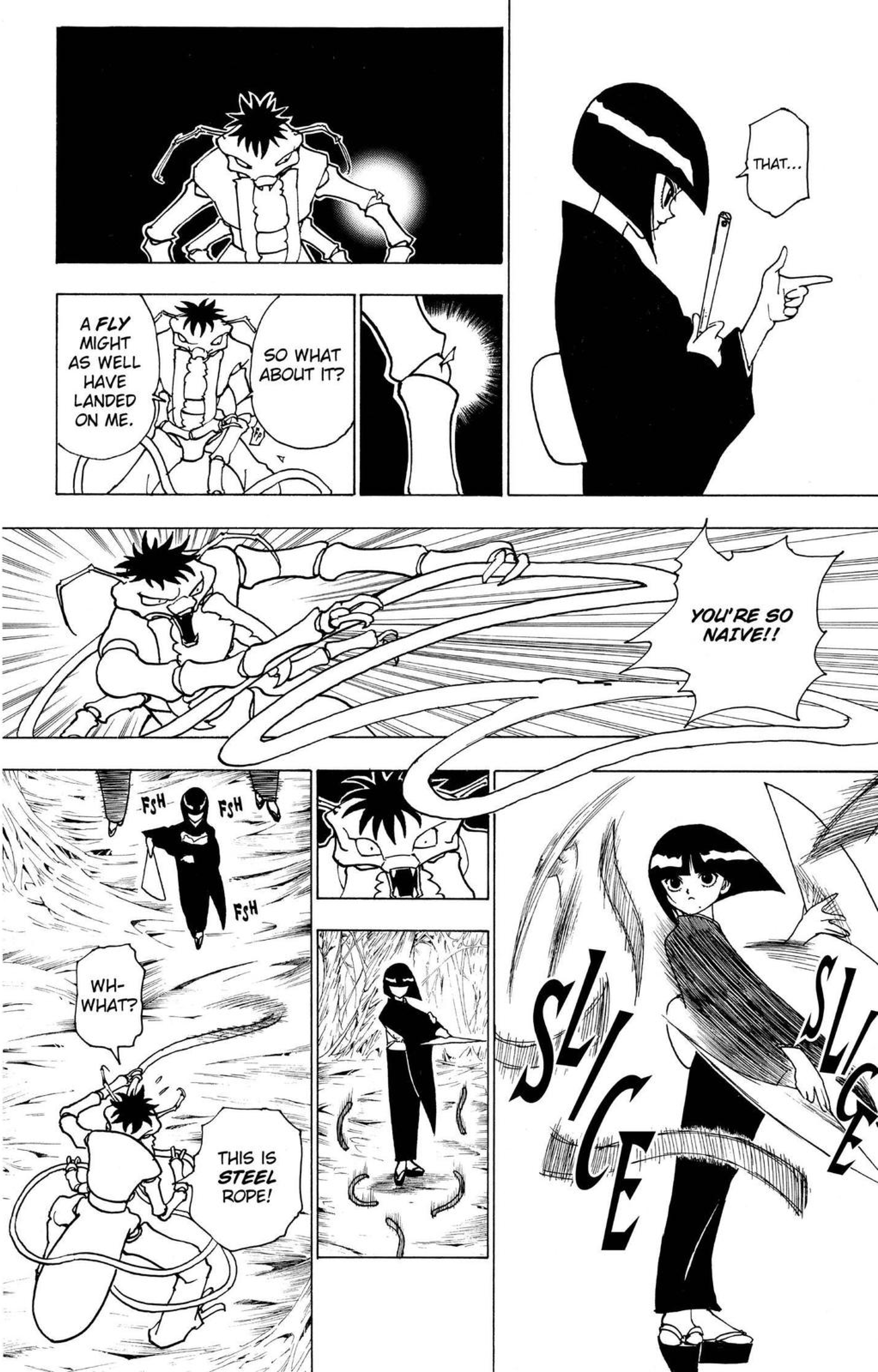


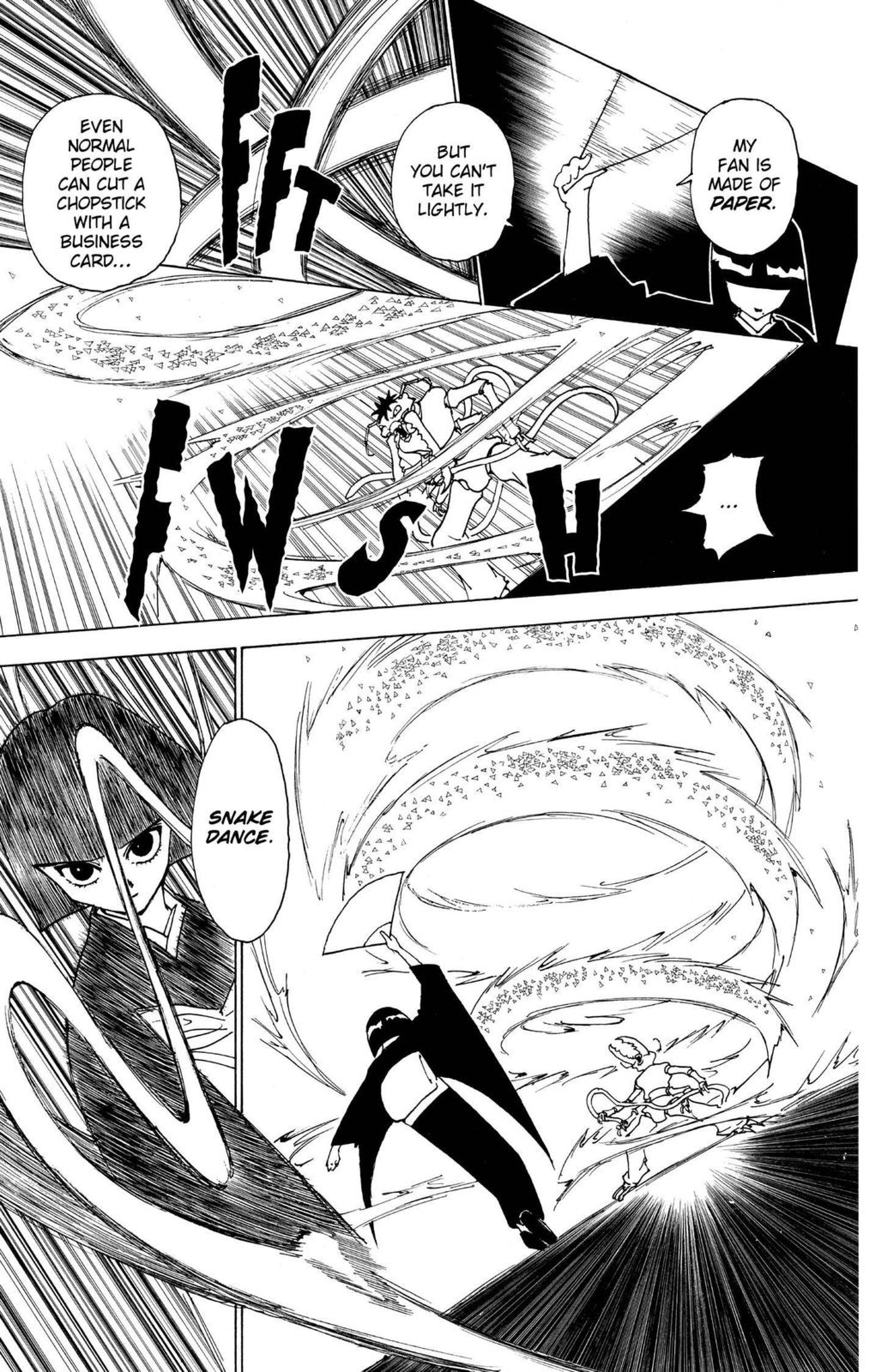
Chapter 226: 10: Part 4

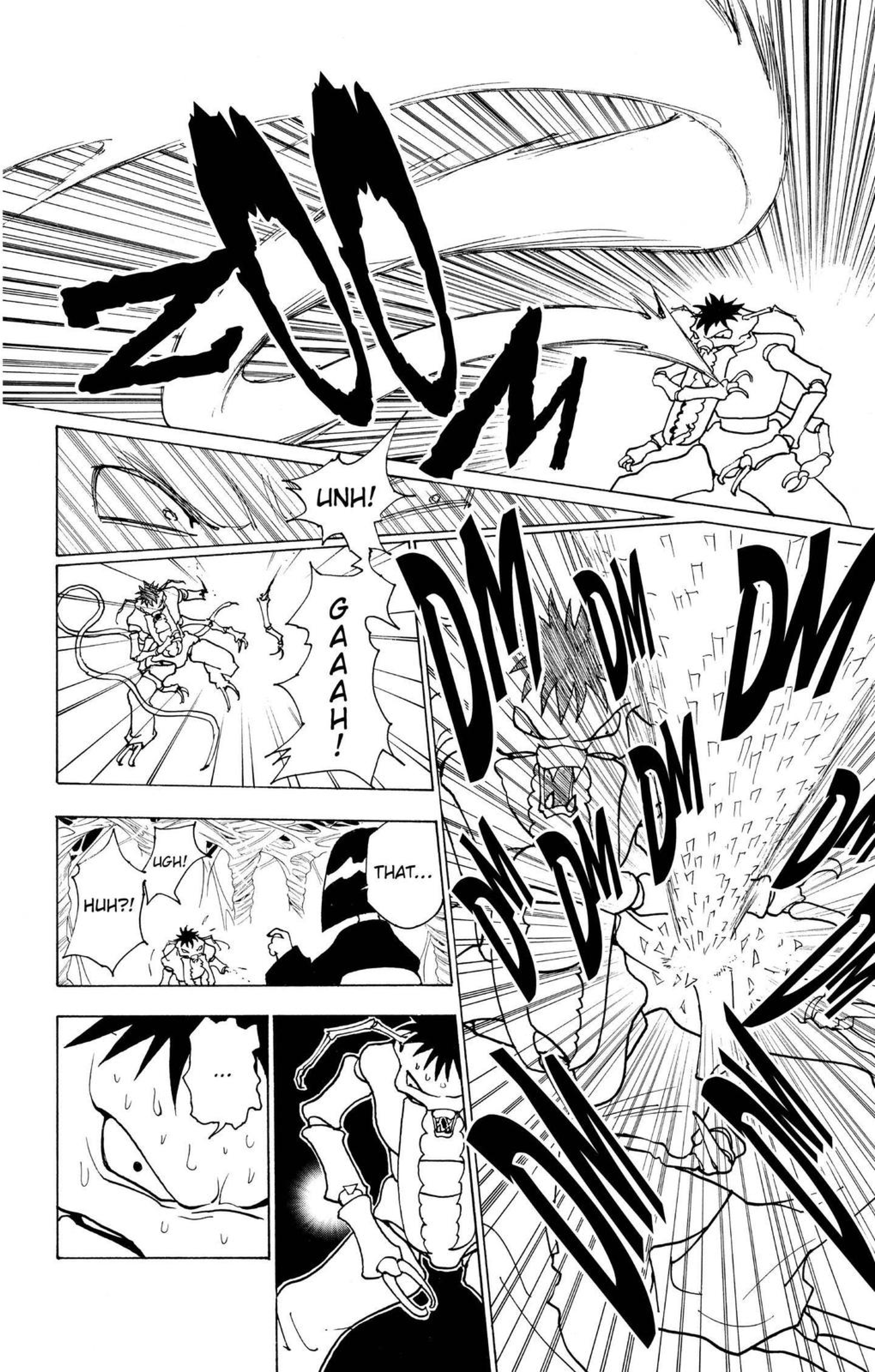

HA HA HA, WHAT IS THAT?!
CONFETTI.
WIND!
FWASH
!

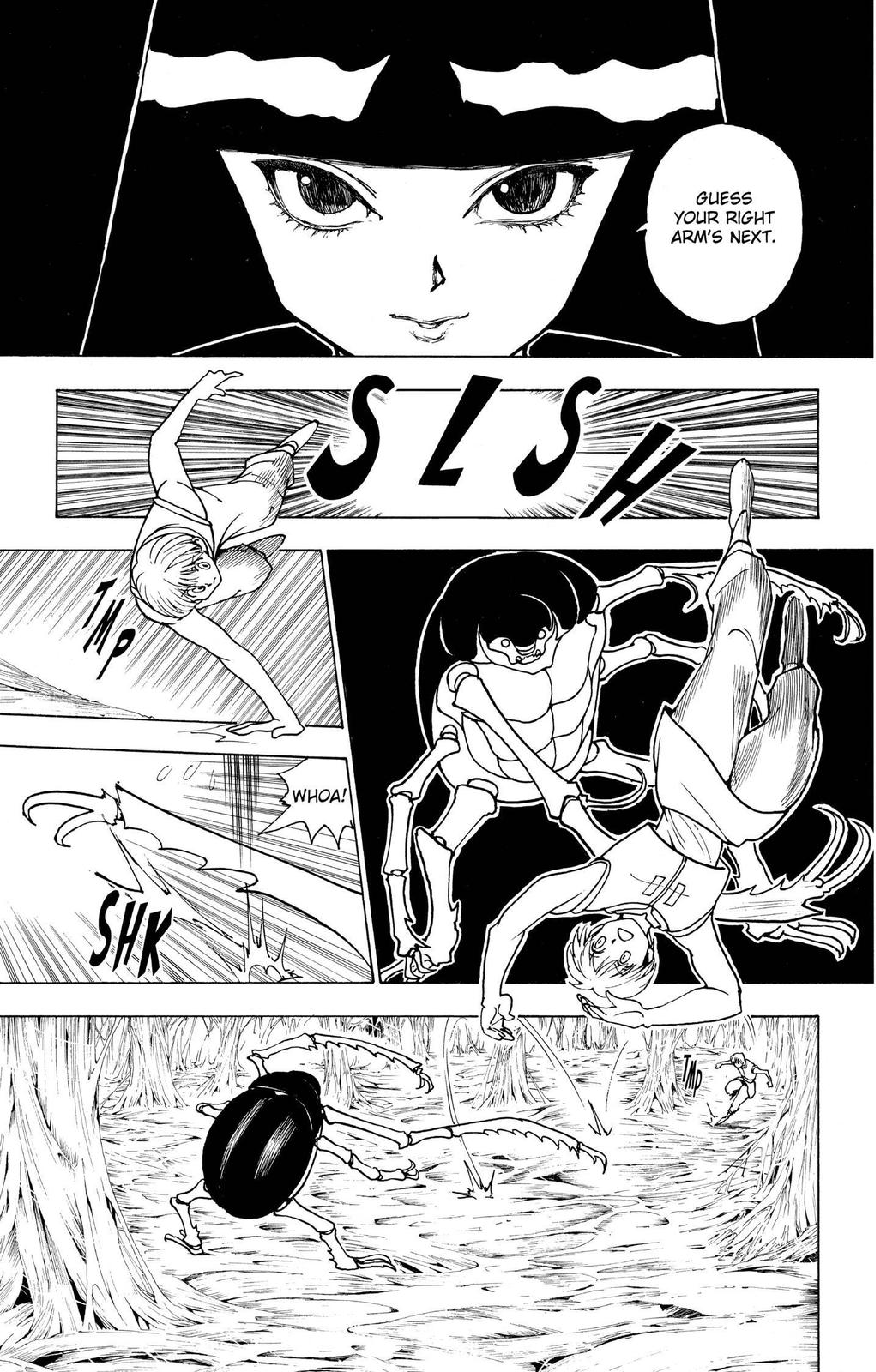

TOK TOK TOK
FLUTTER
FSSH FSSH
FEH!
HA HA, SCRAPS OF PAPER CAN'T HURT ME!
!

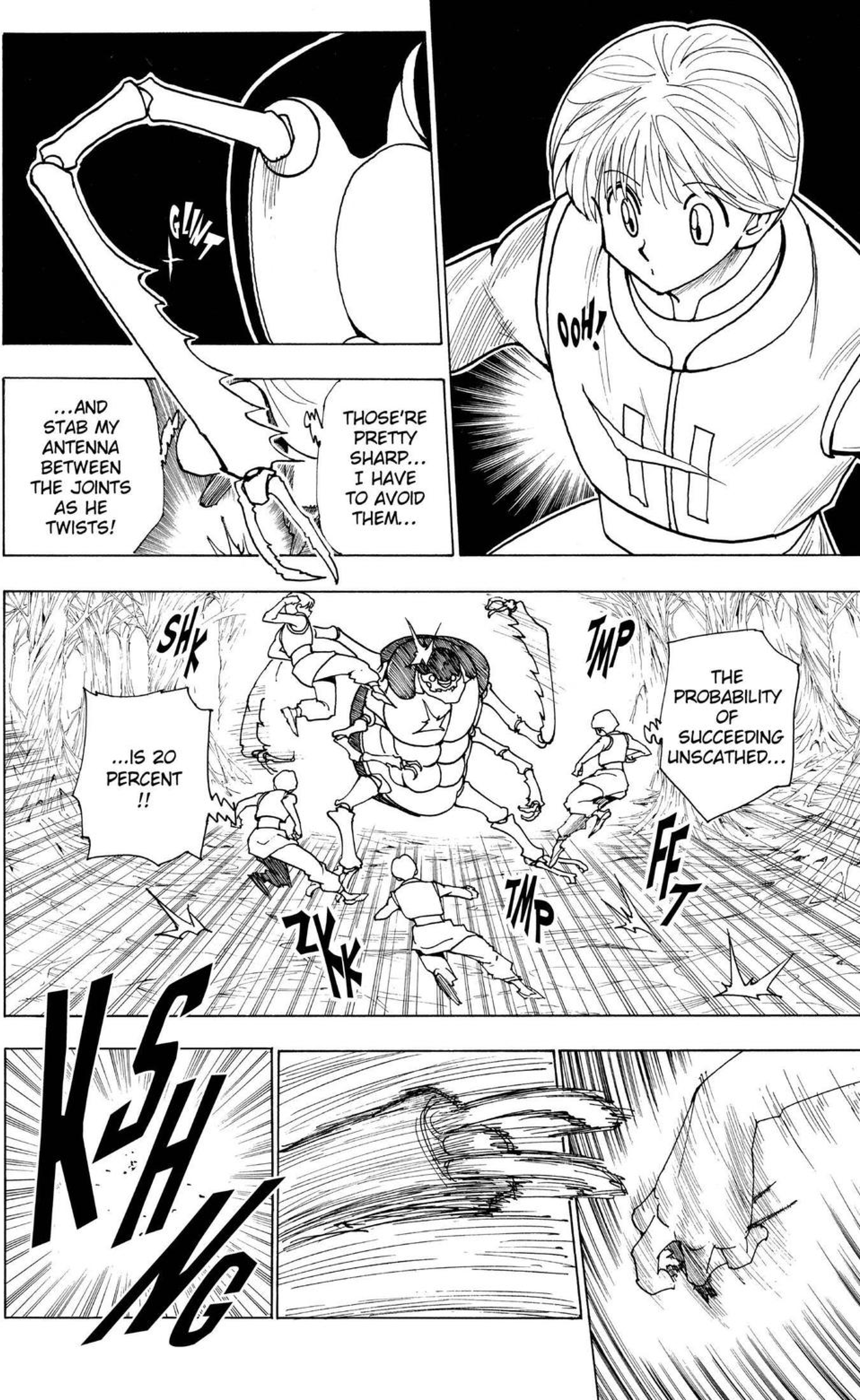

FSSH
MORE PAPER...
SHOOOOOM
IT'S SWIRLING AROUND ME!
FFT
TOK TOK
TOK TOK
FWP
FWP
HA HA HA!
I TOLD YOU IT'S USELESS!

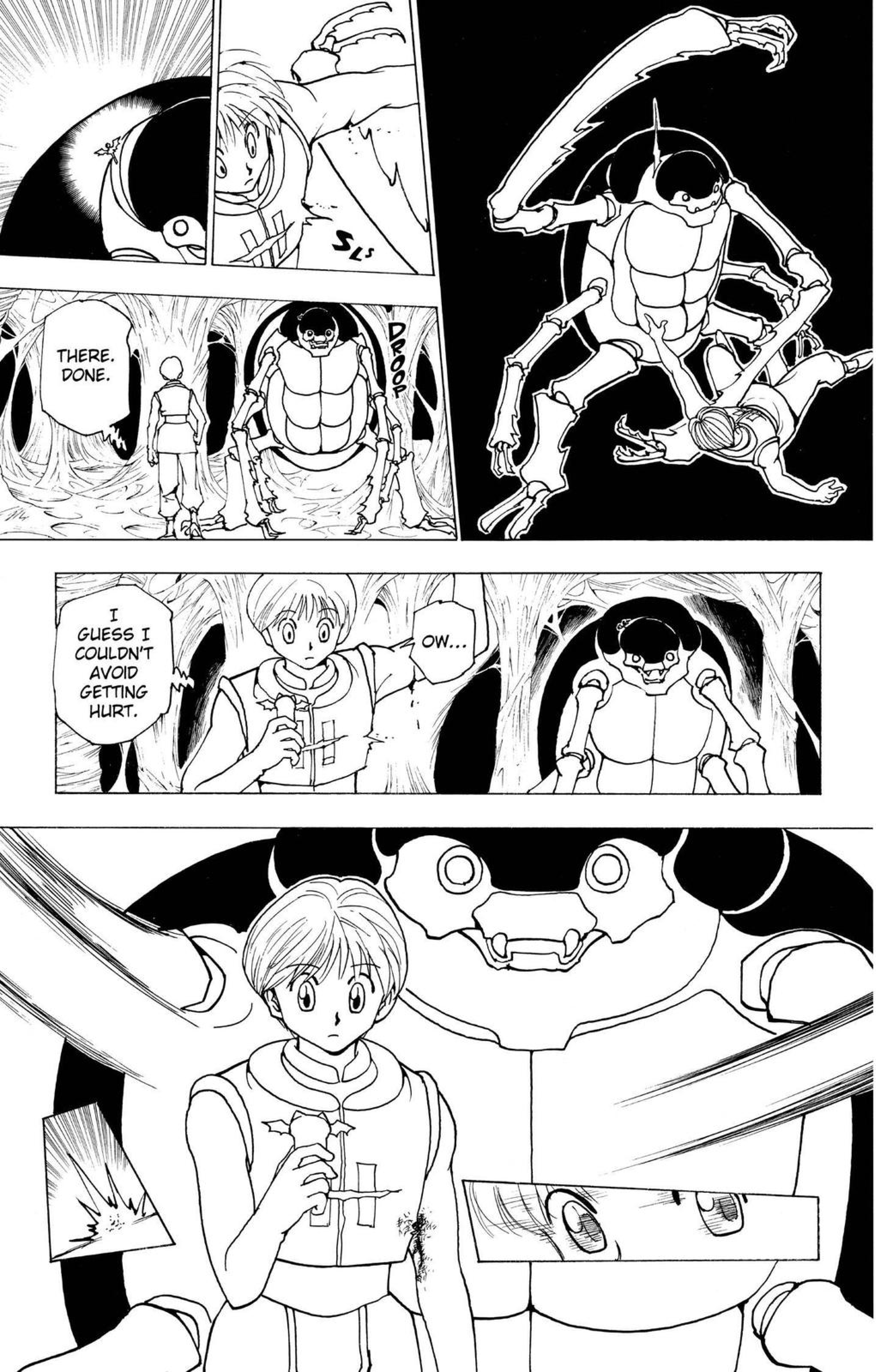

THAT...
SO WHAT ABOUT IT?
A FLY MIGHT AS WELL HAVE LANDED ON ME.
FP
YOU'RE SO NAIVE!!
SLICE
SLICE
FSH
FSH
FSH
WH-WHAT?
THIS IS STEEL ROPE!

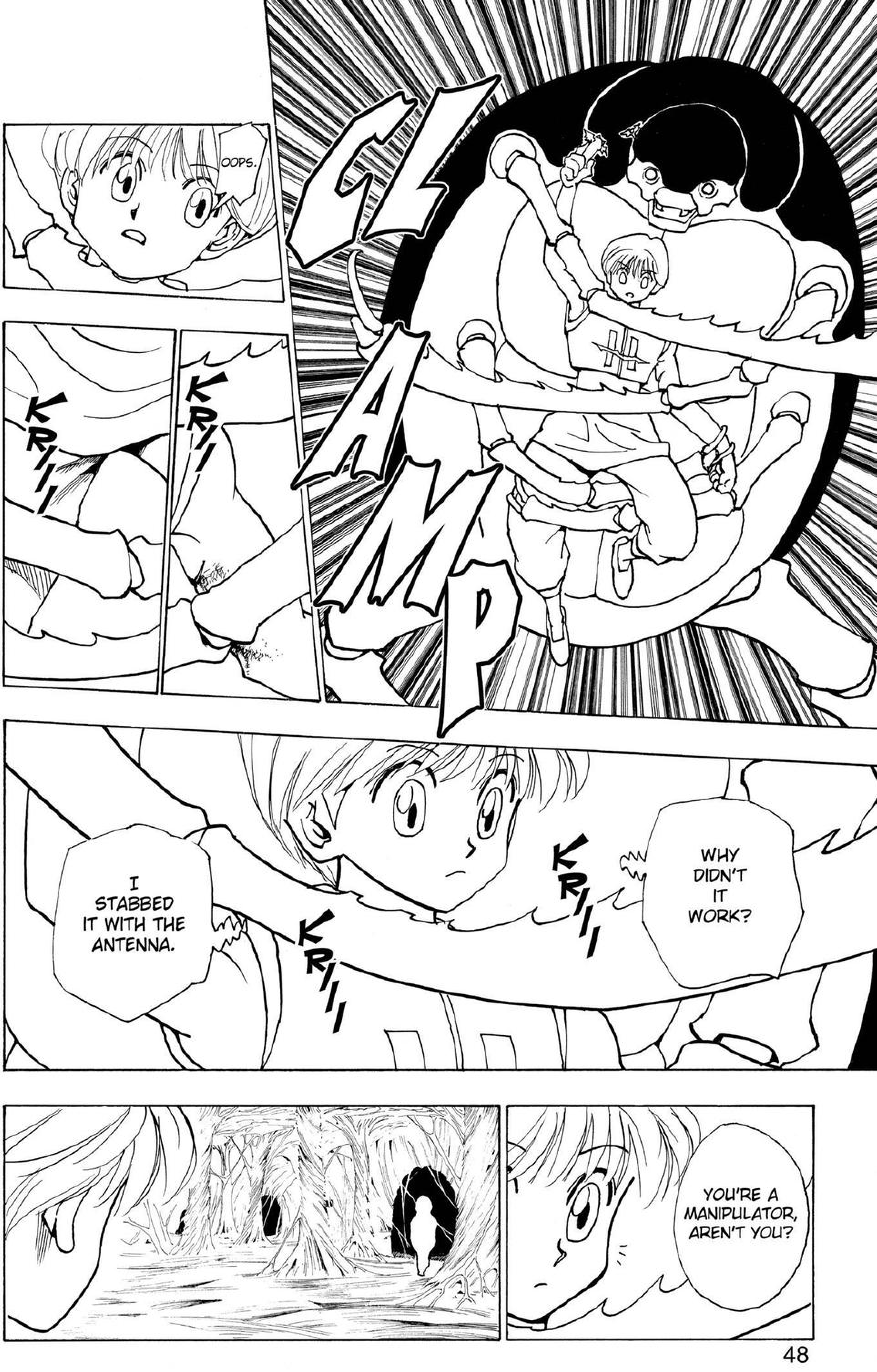

MY FAN IS MADE OF *PAPER*.
BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE IT LIGHTLY.
FFT
EVEN NORMAL PEOPLE CAN CUT A CHOPSTICK WITH A BUSINESS CARD...
FWSH
...
SNAKE DANCE.

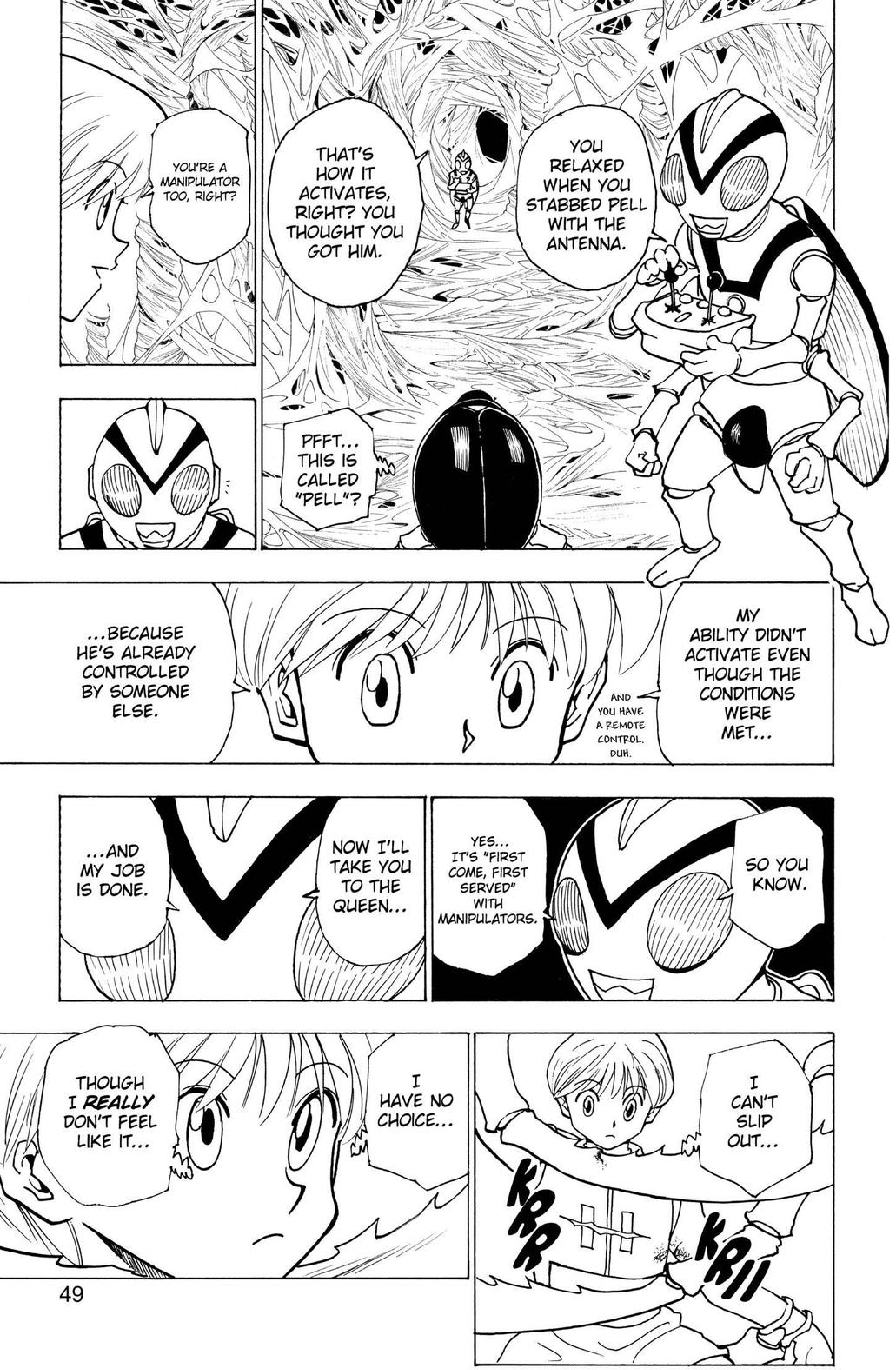

ZOOM
DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM
UNH!
GAAAAH!
THAT...
UGH!
HUH?!
...

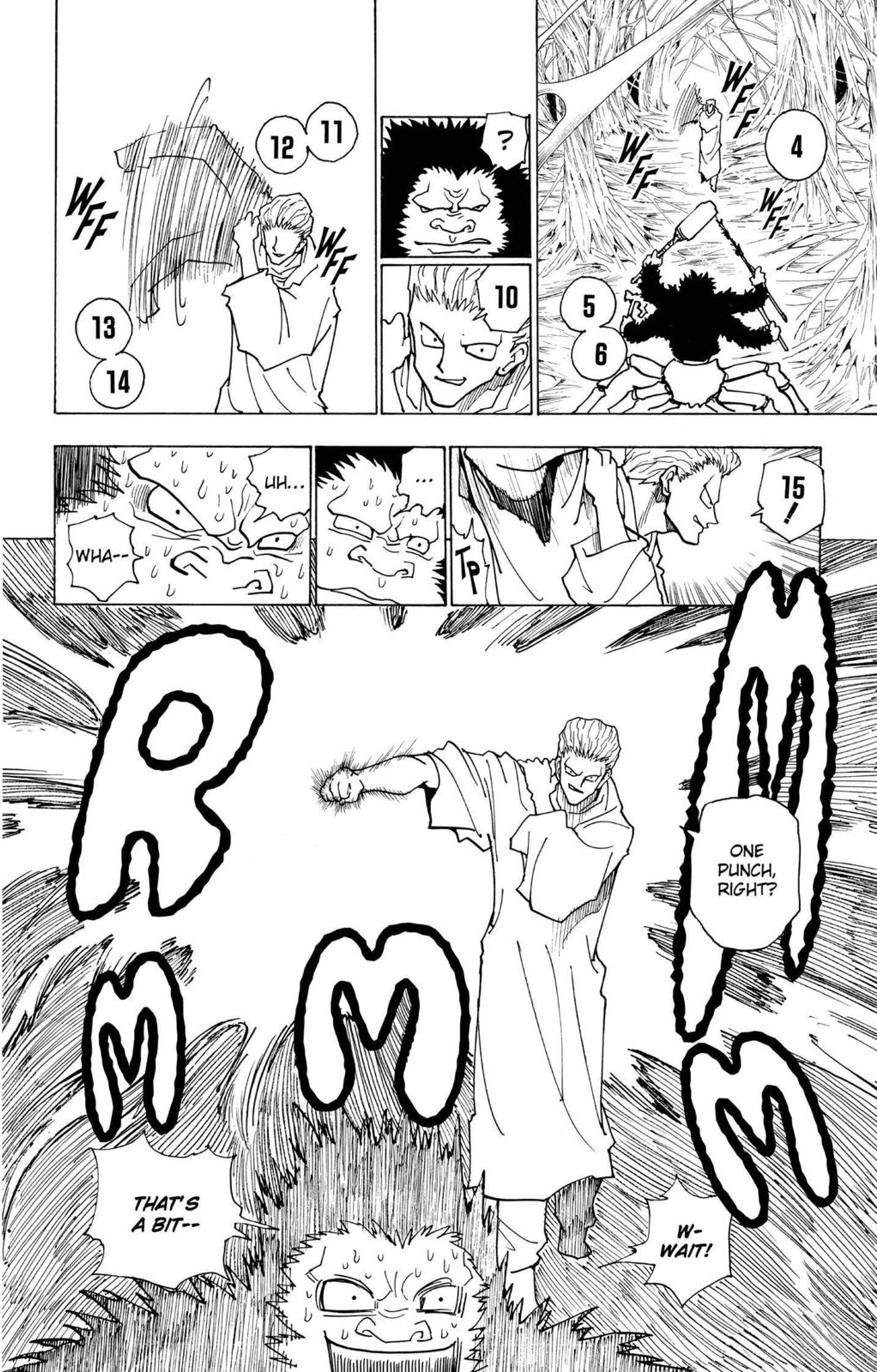

GUESS YOUR RIGHT ARM'S NEXT.
SLSH
TMP
WHOA!
SHK
TMP

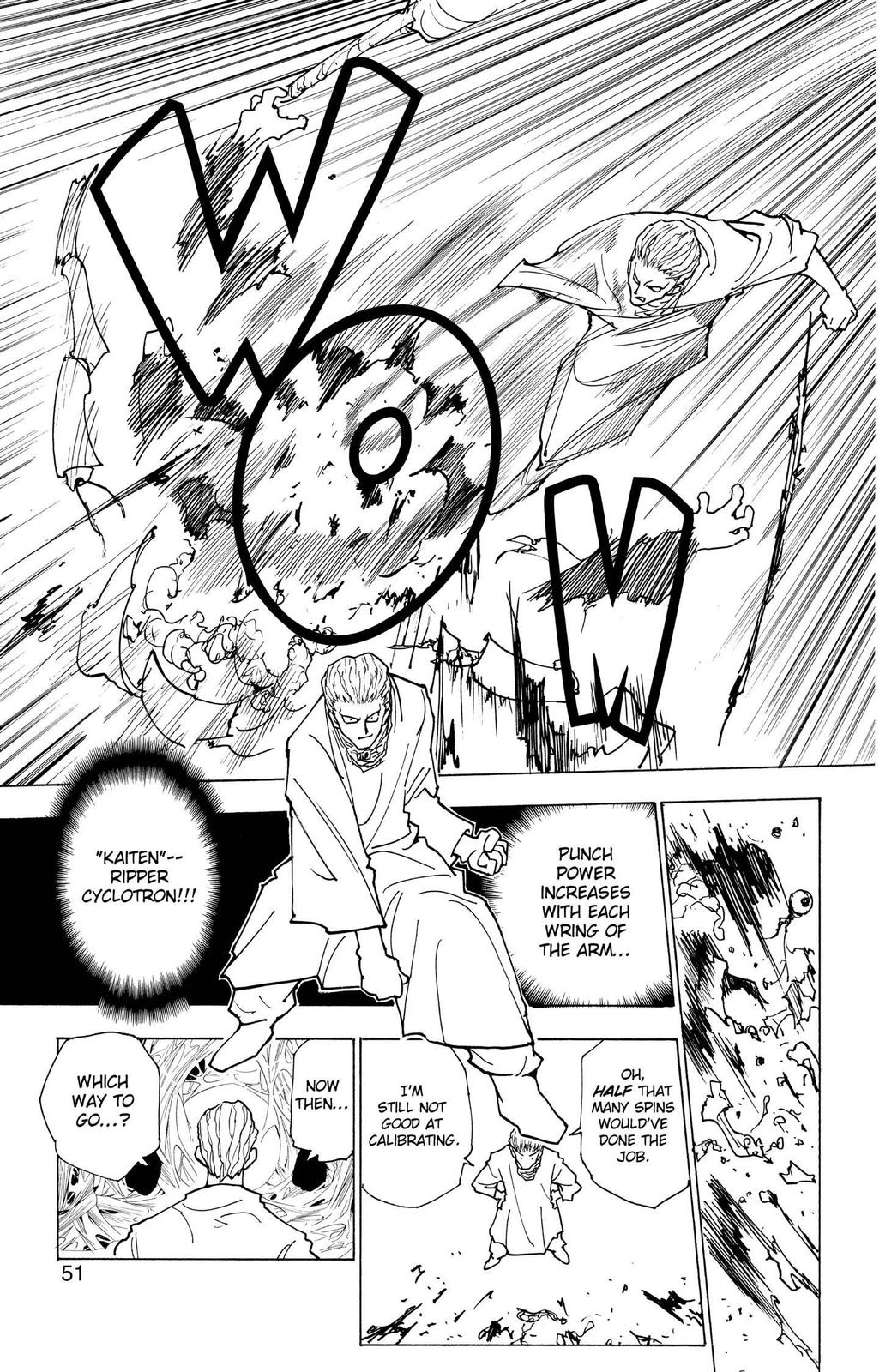

OOH!
GLINT
THOSE'RE PRETTY SHARP... I HAVE TO AVOID THEM...
...AND STAB MY ANTENNA BETWEEN THE JOINTS AS HE TWISTS!
TMP
THE PROBABILITY OF SUCCEEDING UNSCATHED...
SHK
...IS 20 PERCENT !!
FFT
TMP
ZKK
KSHING

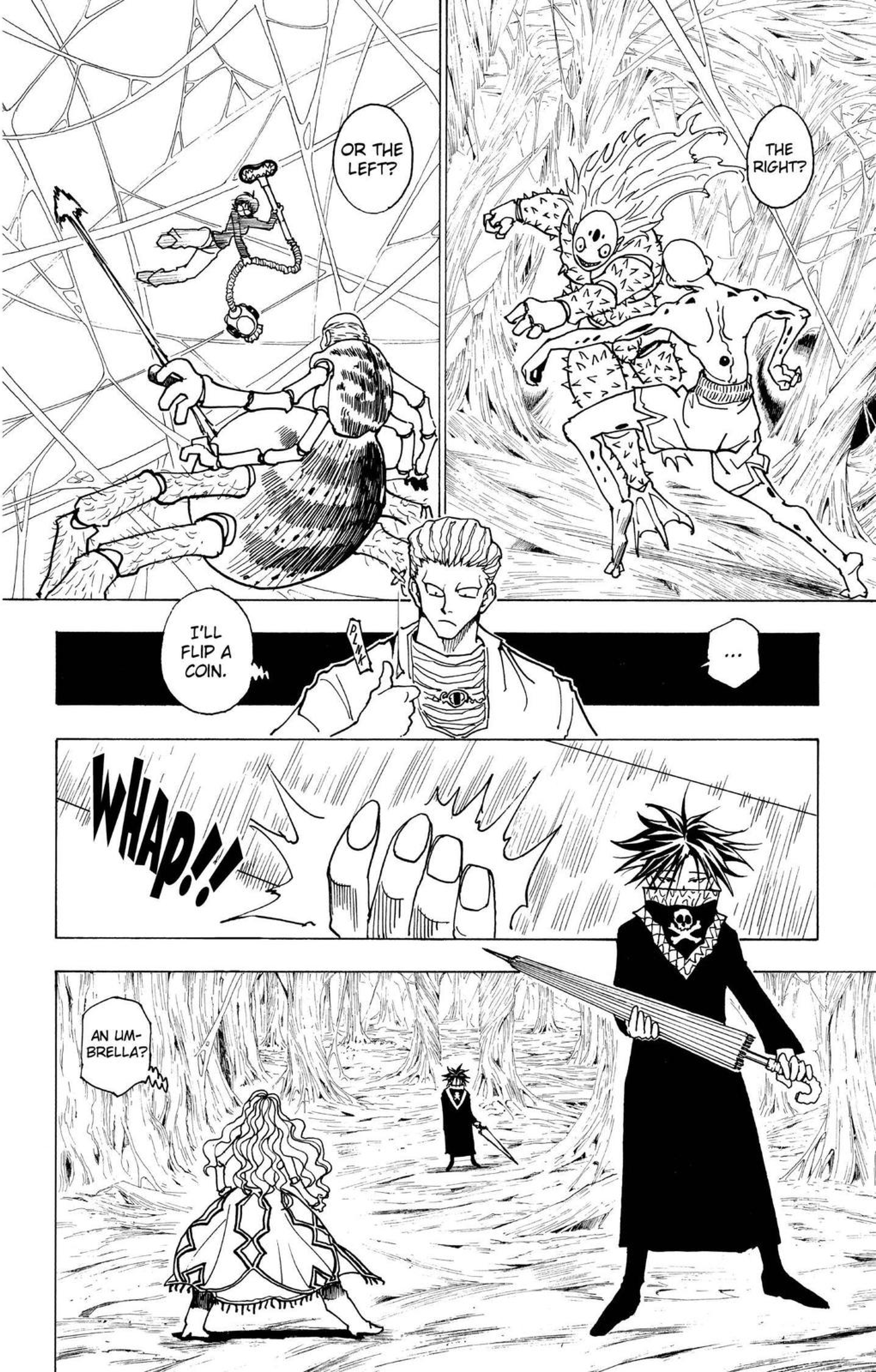

SLs
DROOP
THERE. DONE.
OW...
I GUESS I COULDN'T AVOID GETTING HURT.

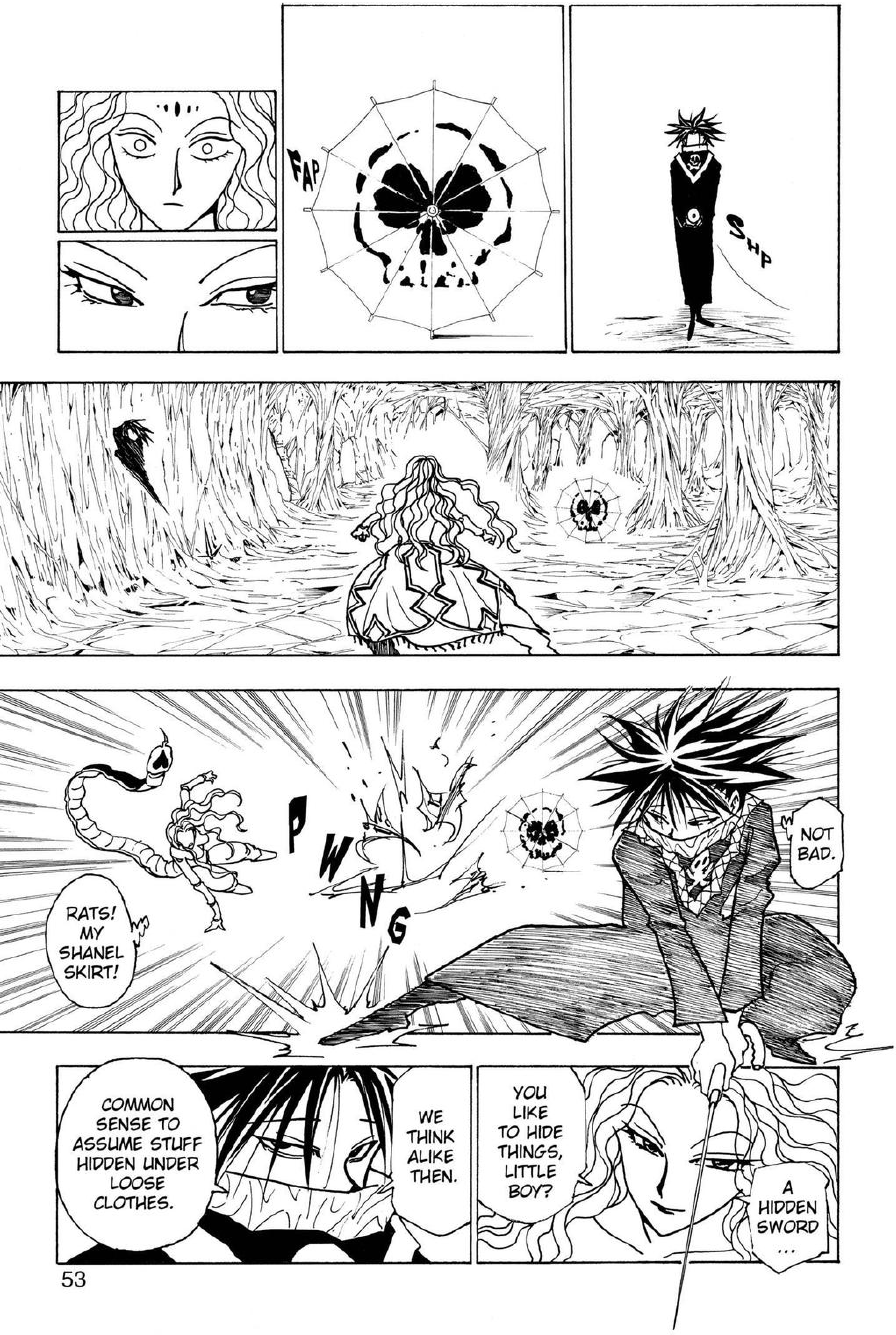

CLAMP
OOPS.
KRIII
KRIII
KRIII
WHY DIDN'T IT WORK?
KRIII
I STABBED IT WITH THE ANTENNA.
YOU'RE A MANIPULATOR, AREN'T YOU?


YOU RELAXED WHEN YOU STABBED PELL WITH THE ANTENNA.
THAT'S HOW IT ACTIVATES, RIGHT? YOU THOUGHT YOU GOT HIM.
PFFT... THIS IS CALLED "PELL"?
YOU'RE A MANIPULATOR TOO, RIGHT?
MY ABILITY DIDN'T ACTIVATE EVEN THOUGH THE CONDITIONS WERE MET...
AND YOU HAVE A REMOTE CONTROL. DUH.
...BECAUSE HE'S ALREADY CONTROLLED BY SOMEONE ELSE.
SO YOU KNOW.
YES... IT'S "FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED" WITH MANIPULATORS.
NOW I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE QUEEN...
...AND MY JOB IS DONE.
I CAN'T SLIP OUT...
KRR
KRII
I HAVE NO CHOICE...
THOUGH I *REALLY* DON'T FEEL LIKE IT...

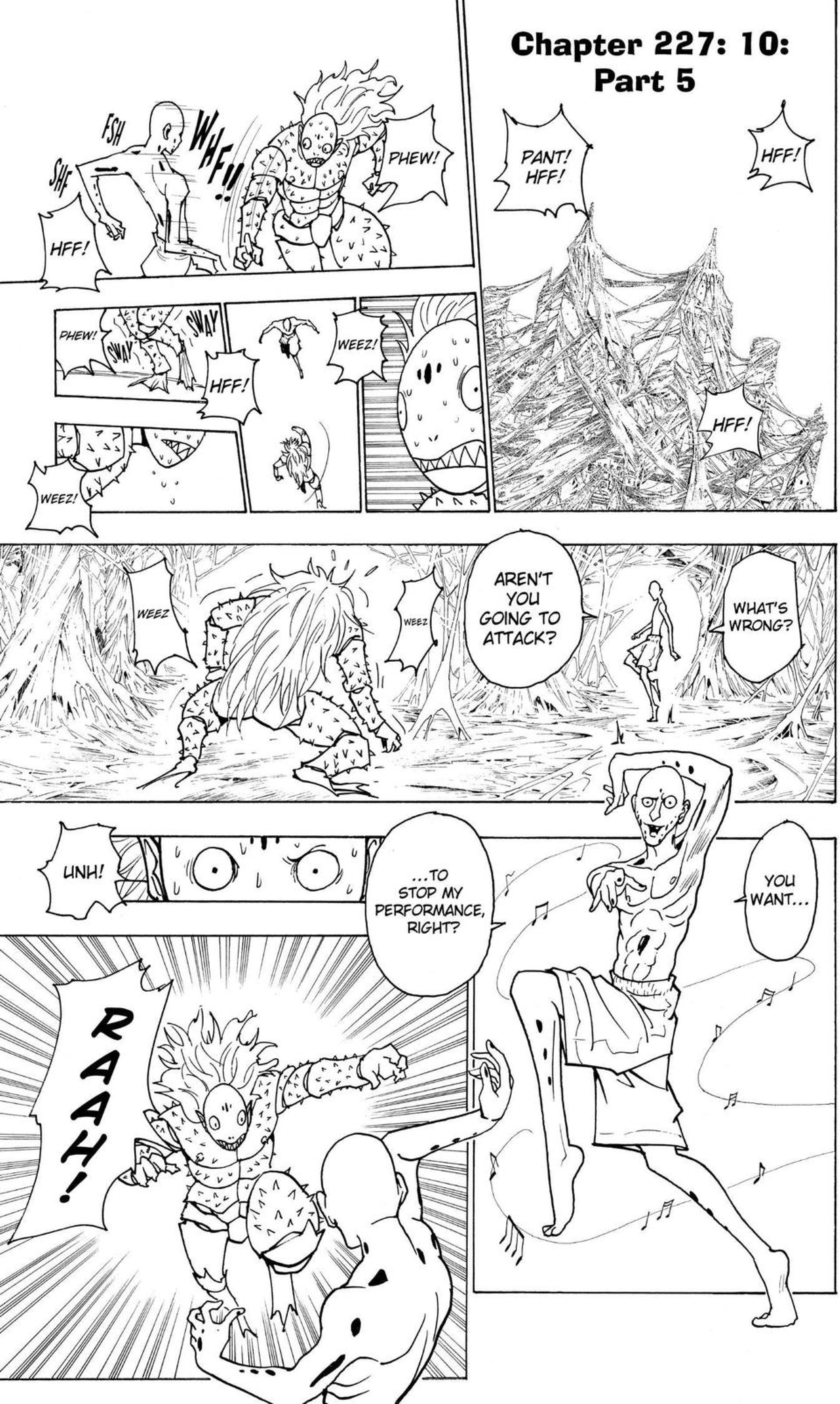

WFF
WFF
4
WFF
WFF
5
6
?
10
11
12
WFF
WFF
13
14
15!
TP
...
UH...
WHA--
RMMMM
ONE PUNCH, RIGHT?
W-WAIT!
THAT'S A BIT--

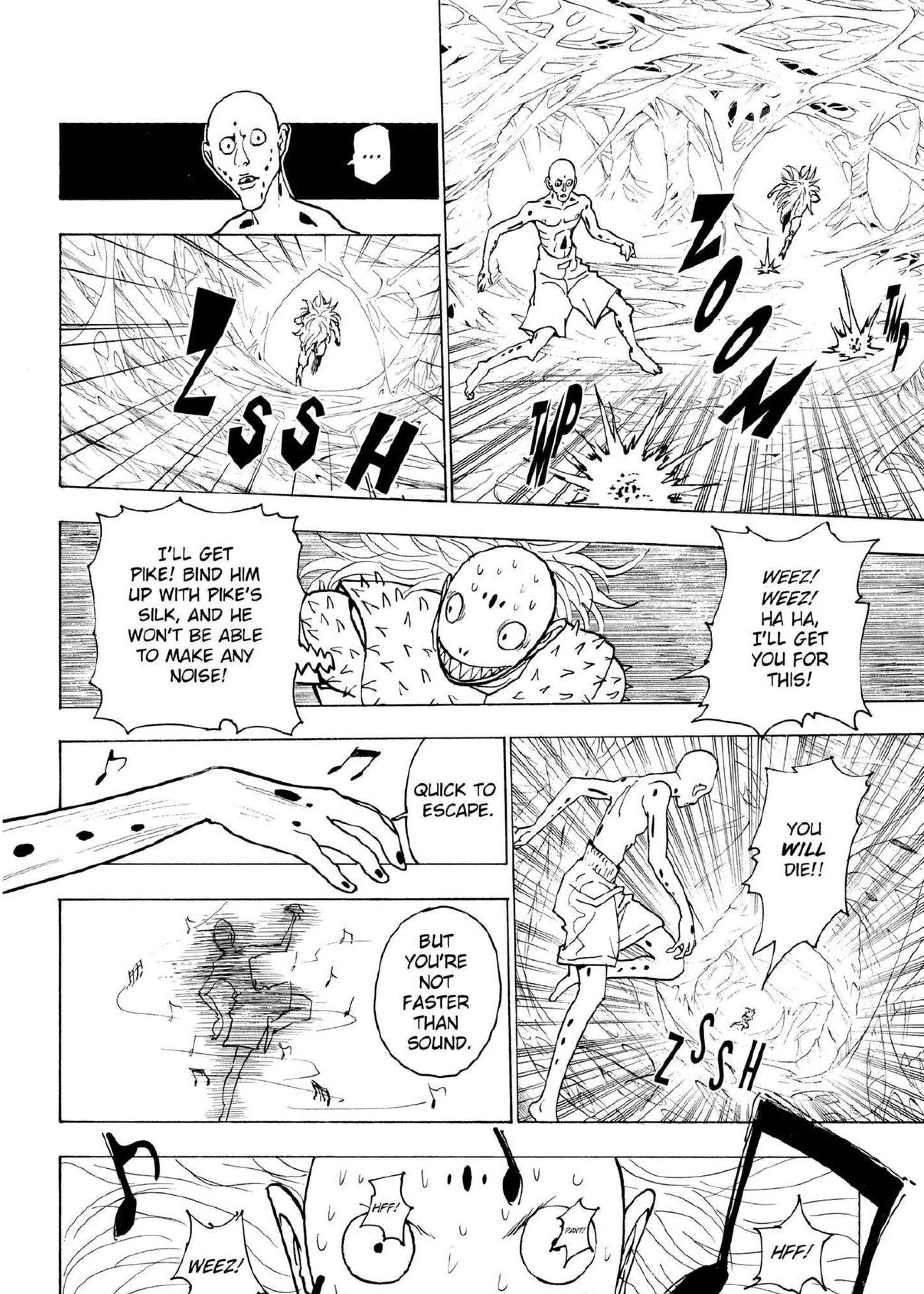

WOOM
PUNCH POWER INCREASES WITH EACH WRING OF THE ARM...
"KAITEN"-- RIPPER CYCLOTRON!!!
OH, *HALF* THAT MANY SPINS WOULD'VE DONE THE JOB.
I'M STILL NOT GOOD AT CALIBRATING.
NOW THEN...
WHICH WAY TO GO...?

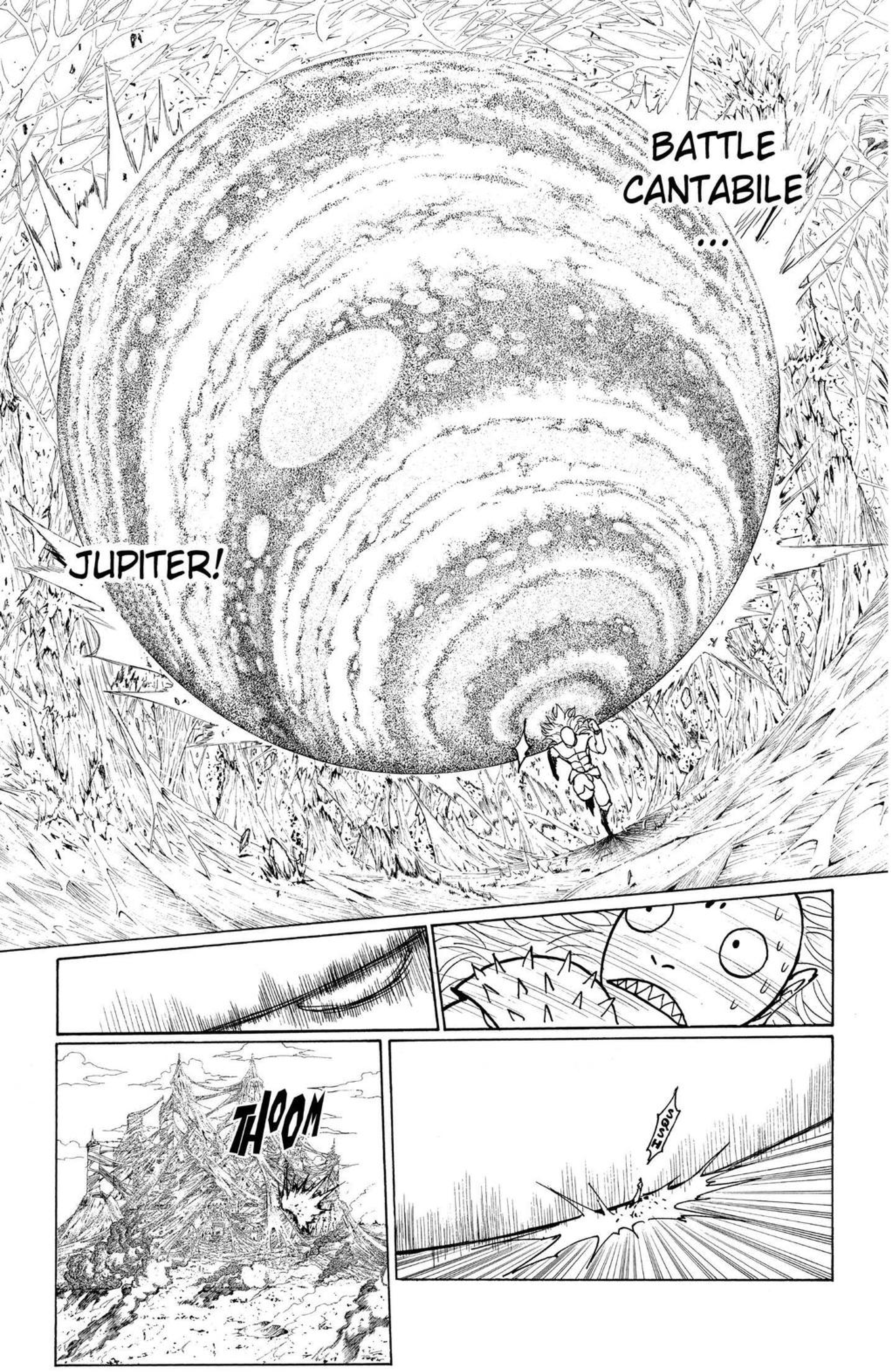

THE RIGHT?
OR THE LEFT?
...
PLINK
I'LL FLIP A COIN.
WHAP!!
AN UMBRELLA?

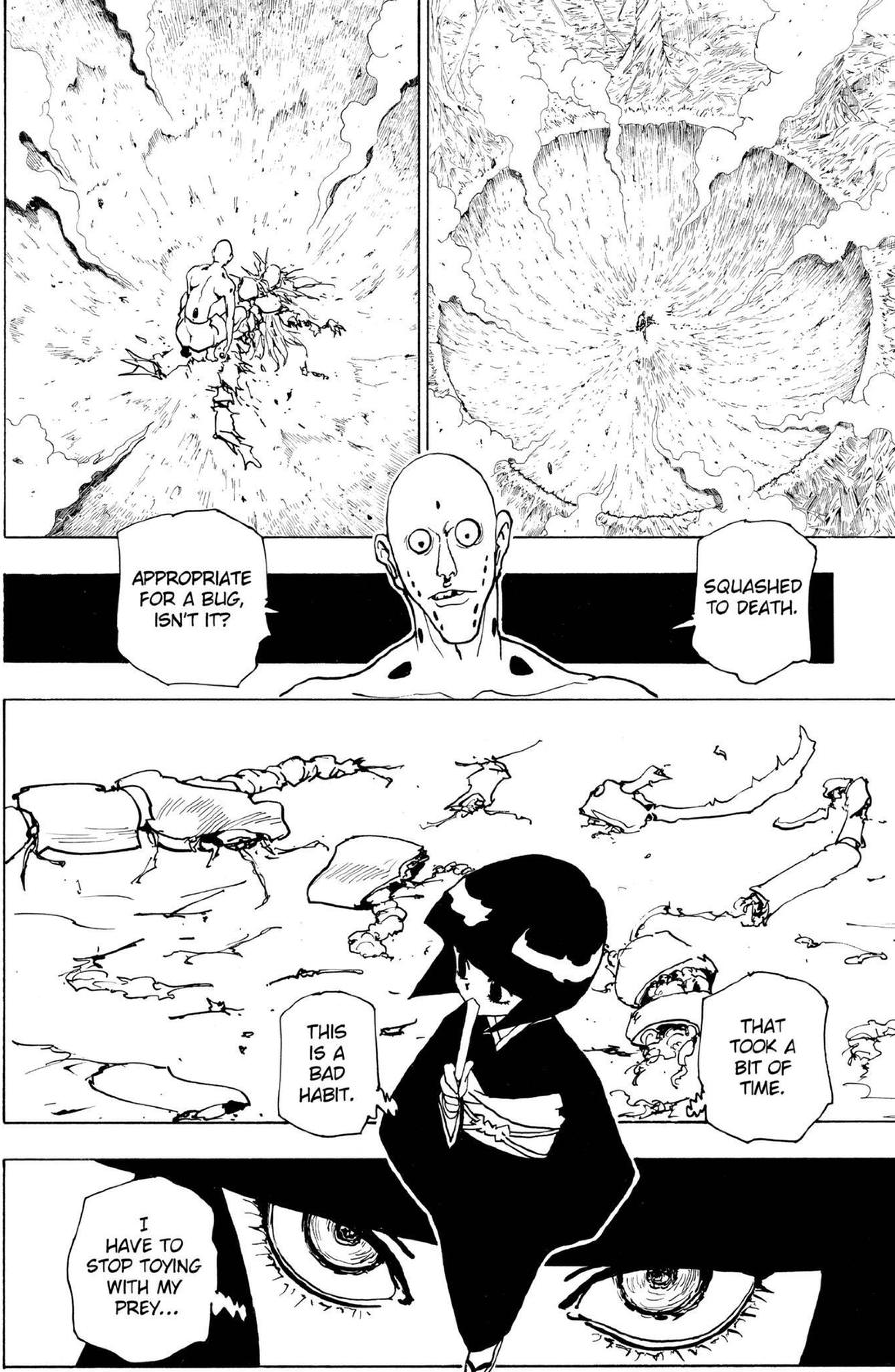

SHP
FAP
NOT BAD.
PWNG
RATS! MY SHANEL SKIRT!
A HIDDEN SWORD ...
YOU LIKE TO HIDE THINGS, LITTLE BOY?
WE THINK ALIKE THEN.
COMMON SENSE TO ASSUME STUFF HIDDEN UNDER LOOSE CLOTHES.

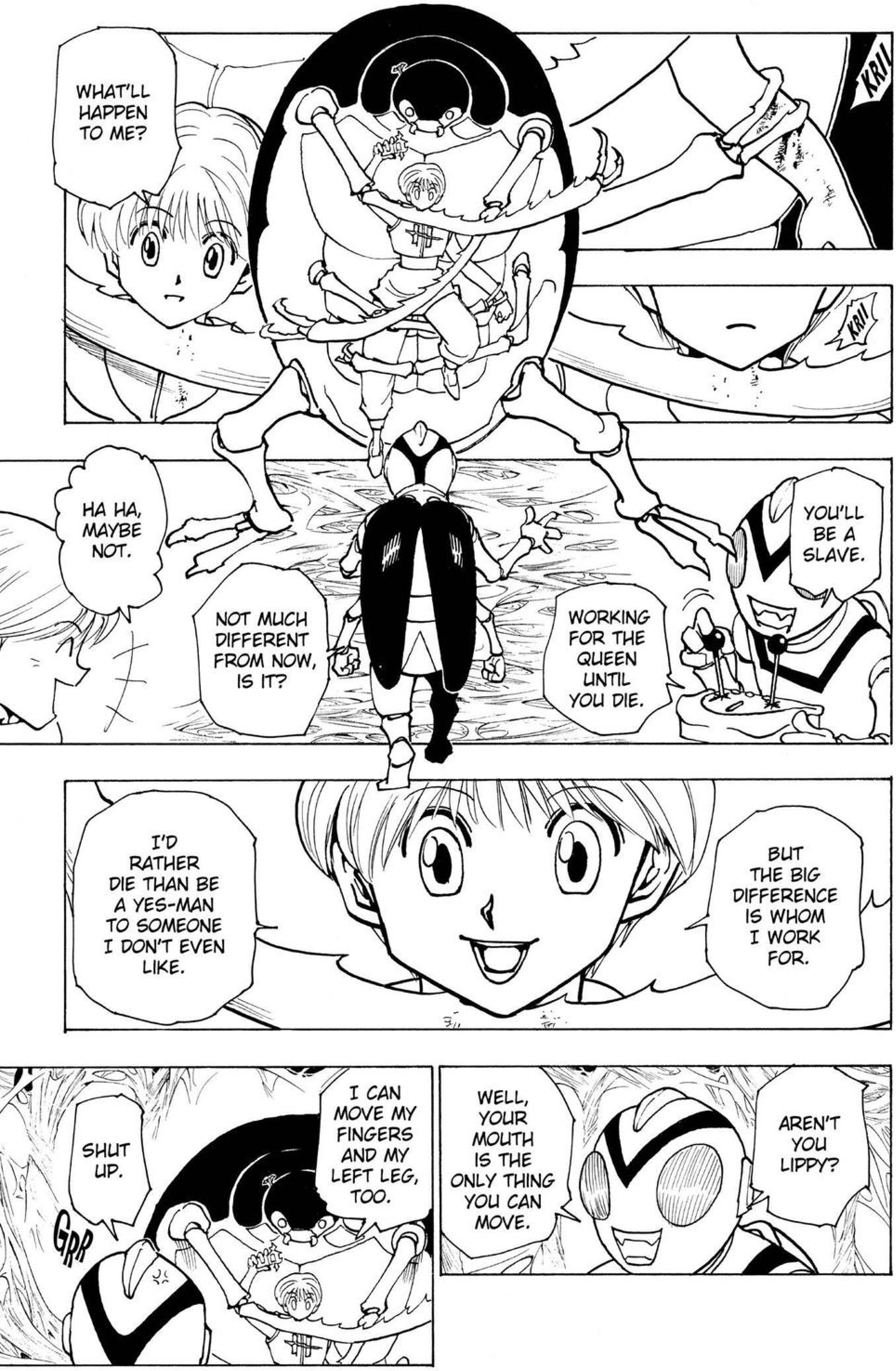
Chapter 227: 10: Part 5

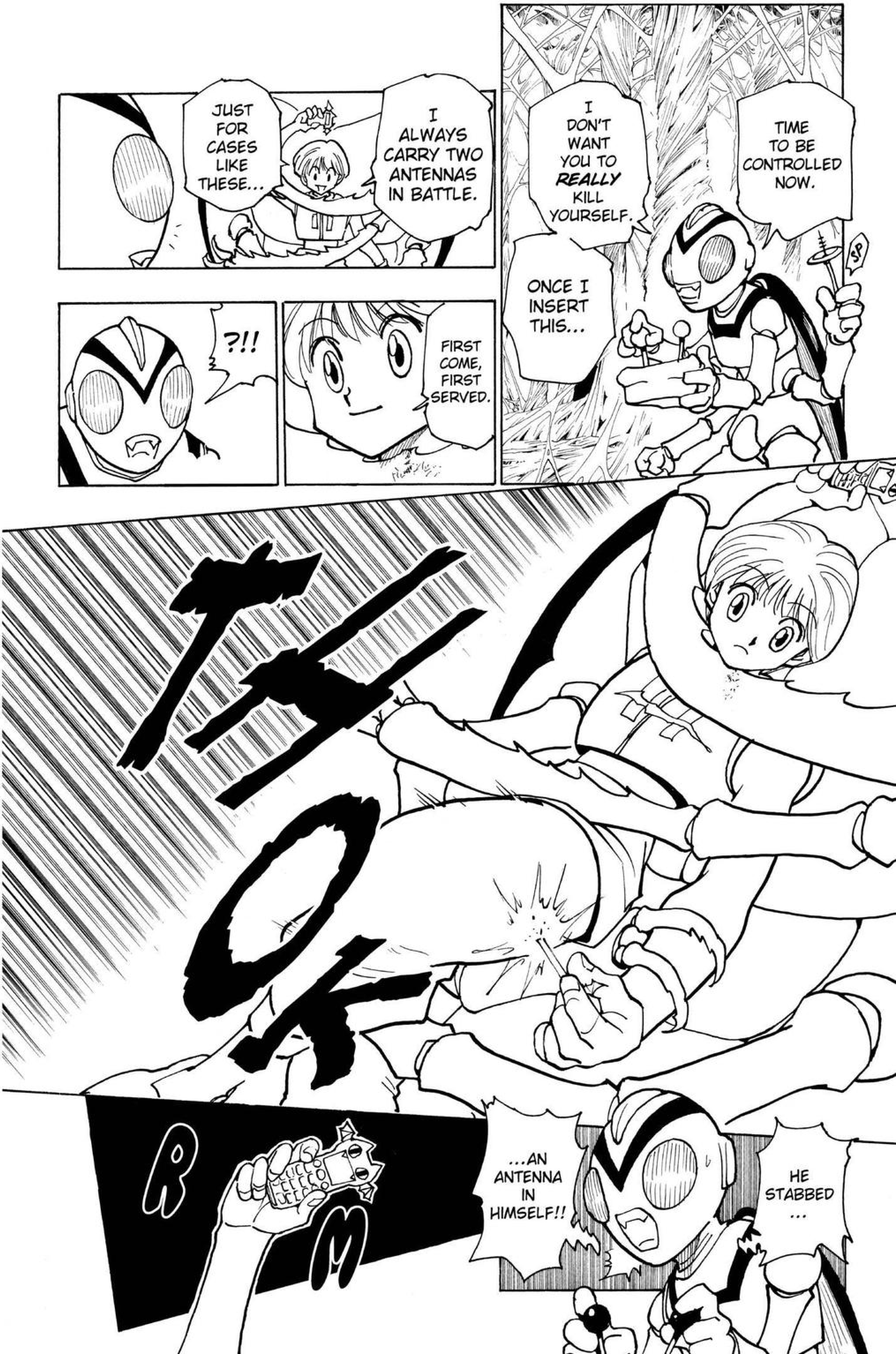

PANT! HFF!
HFF!
HFF!
PHEW!
WHF!!
FSH
SHF
HFF!
WEEZ!
HFF!
PHEW!
SWAY
SWAY
WEEZ!
WHAT'S WRONG?
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ATTACK?
WEEZ
WEEZ
YOU WANT...
...TO STOP MY PERFORMANCE, RIGHT?
UNH!
RAAAH!

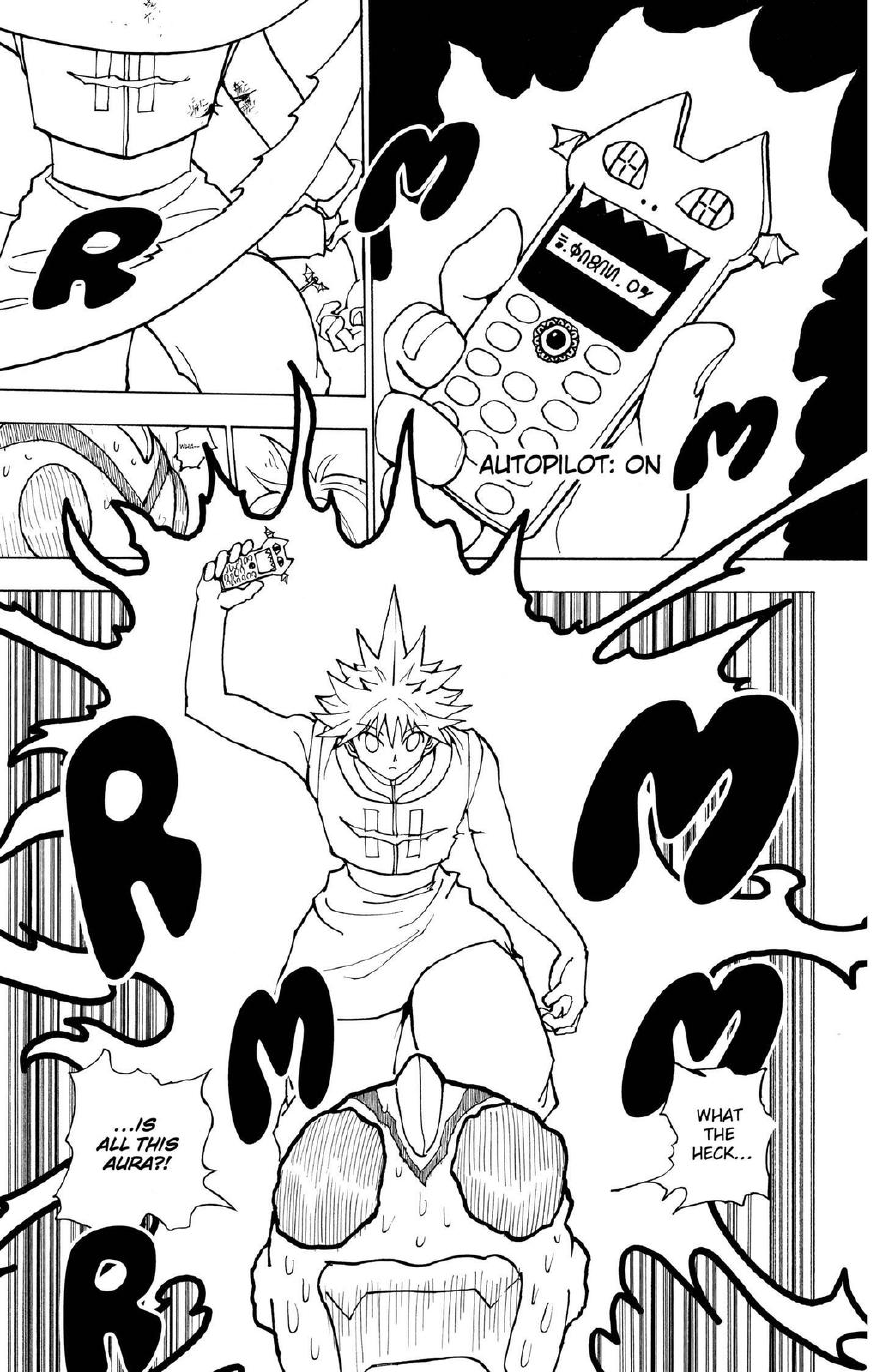

ZOOM
TMP
TMP
…
ZSSH
WEEZ! WEEZ! HA HA, I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS!
I'LL GET PIKE! BIND HIM UP WITH PIKE'S SILK, AND HE WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE ANY NOISE!
YOU ***WILL*** DIE!!
ZSSH
QUICK TO ESCAPE.
BUT YOU'RE NOT FASTER THAN SOUND.
HFF!
PANT!
HFF!
WEEZ!

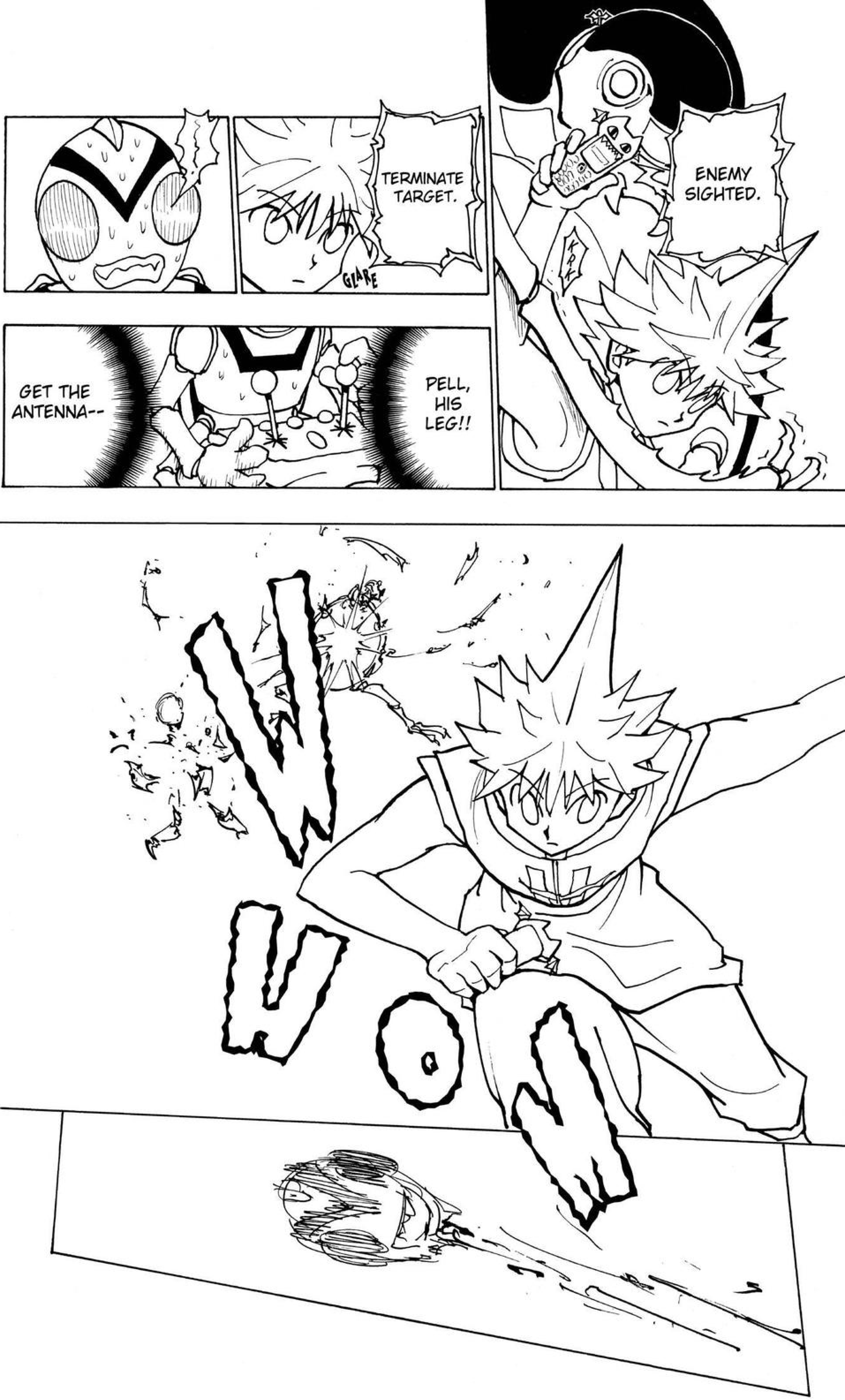

BATTLE CANTABILE ...
JUPITER!
THOOM


SQUASHED TO DEATH.
APPROPRIATE FOR A BUG, ISN'T IT?
THAT TOOK A BIT OF TIME.
THIS IS A BAD HABIT.
I HAVE TO STOP TOYING WITH MY PREY...

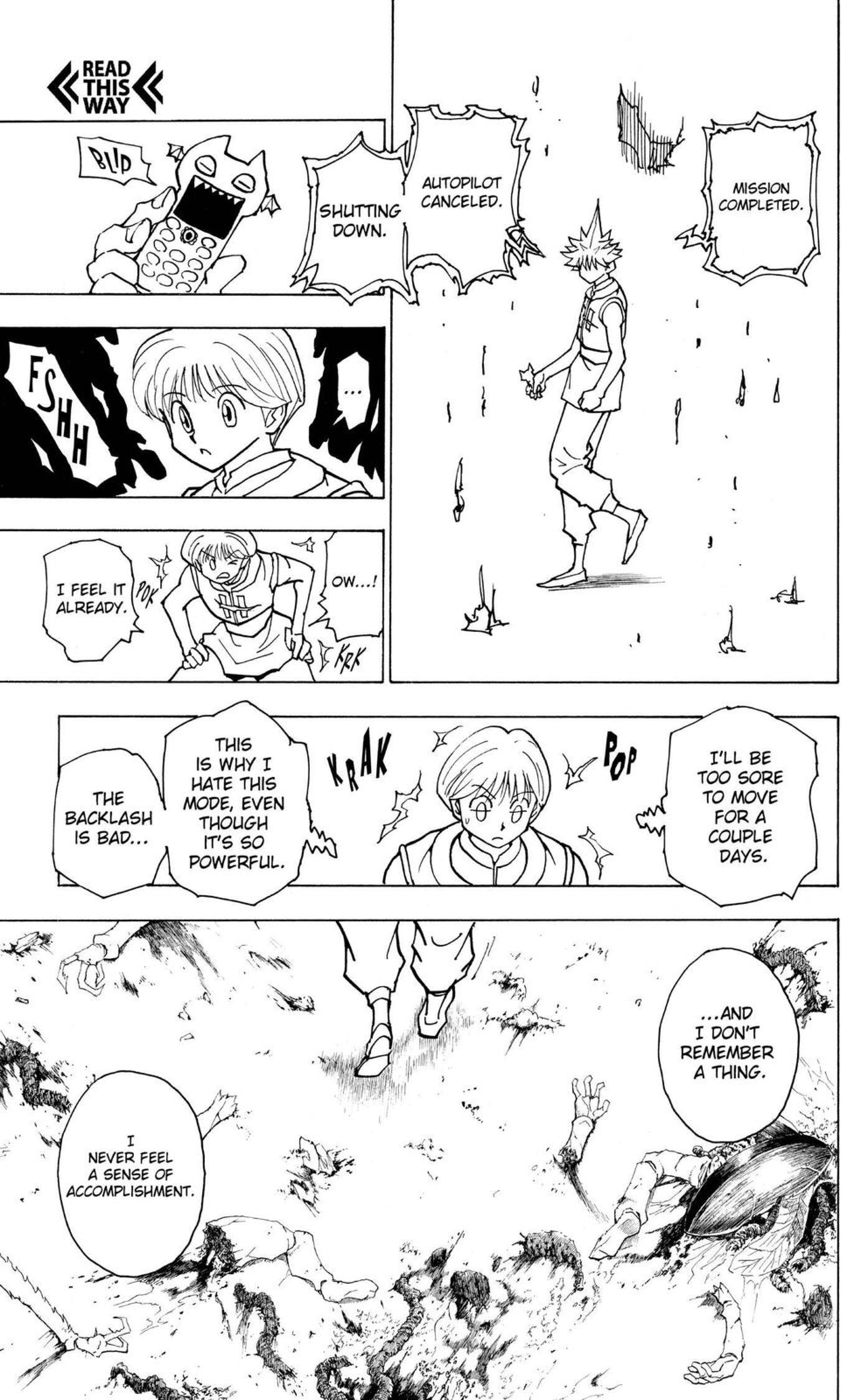

KRII
WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO ME?
KRII
YOU'LL BE A SLAVE.
WORKING FOR THE QUEEN UNTIL YOU DIE.
NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM NOW, IS IT?
HA HA, MAYBE NOT.
BUT THE BIG DIFFERENCE IS WHOM I WORK FOR.
I'D RATHER DIE THAN BE A YES-MAN TO SOMEONE I DON'T EVEN LIKE.
AREN'T YOU LIPPY?
WELL, YOUR MOUTH IS THE ONLY THING YOU CAN MOVE.
I CAN MOVE MY FINGERS AND MY LEFT LEG, TOO.
SHUT UP.
GRR

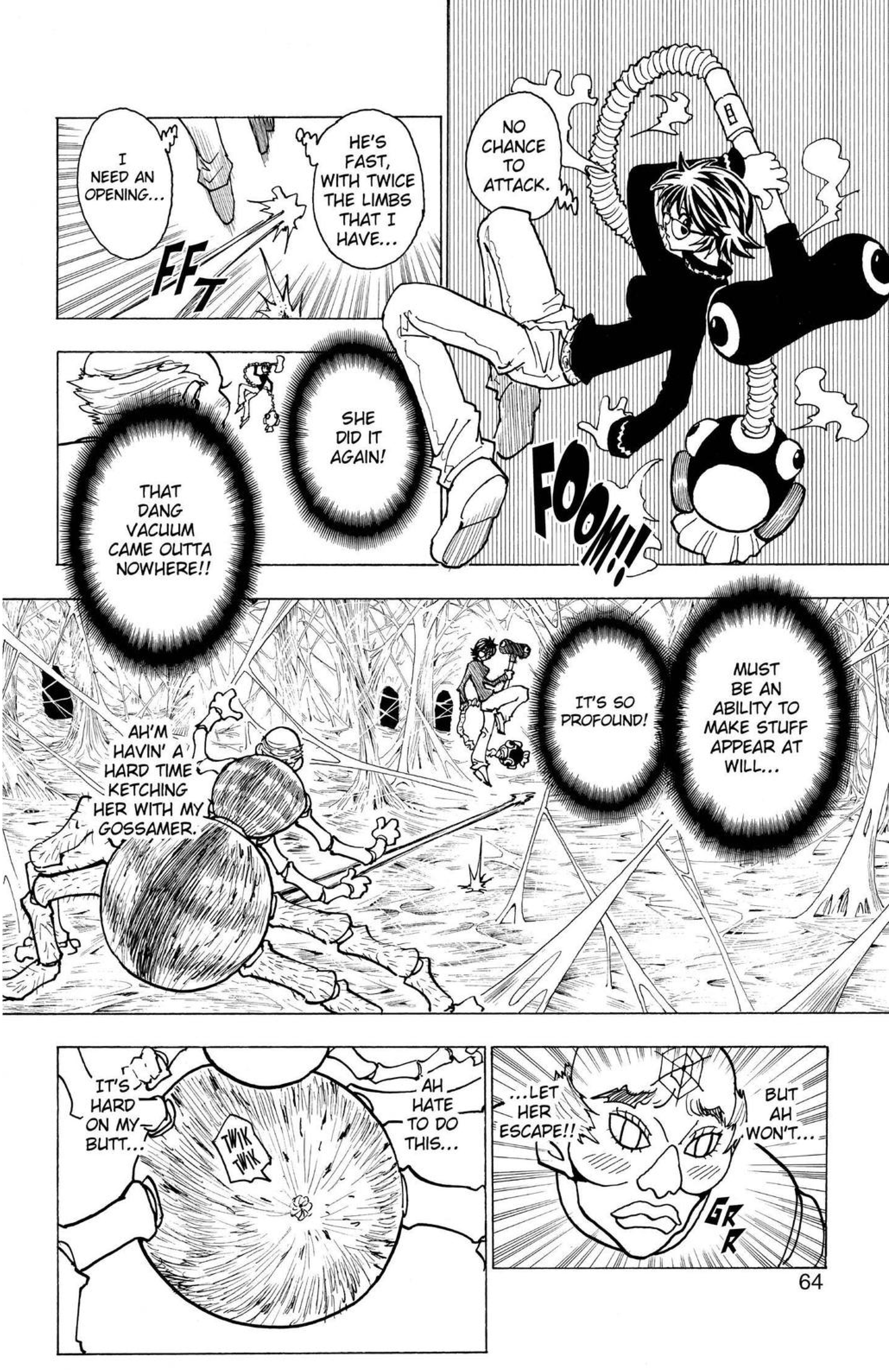

TIME TO BE CONTROLLED NOW.
SP
I DON'T WANT YOU TO ***REALLY*** KILL YOURSELF.
ONCE I INSERT THIS...
I ALWAYS CARRY TWO ANTENNAS IN BATTLE.
JUST FOR CASES LIKE THESE...
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.
?!!
ZOK
HE STABBED ...
...AN ANTENNA IN HIMSELF!!
R
M

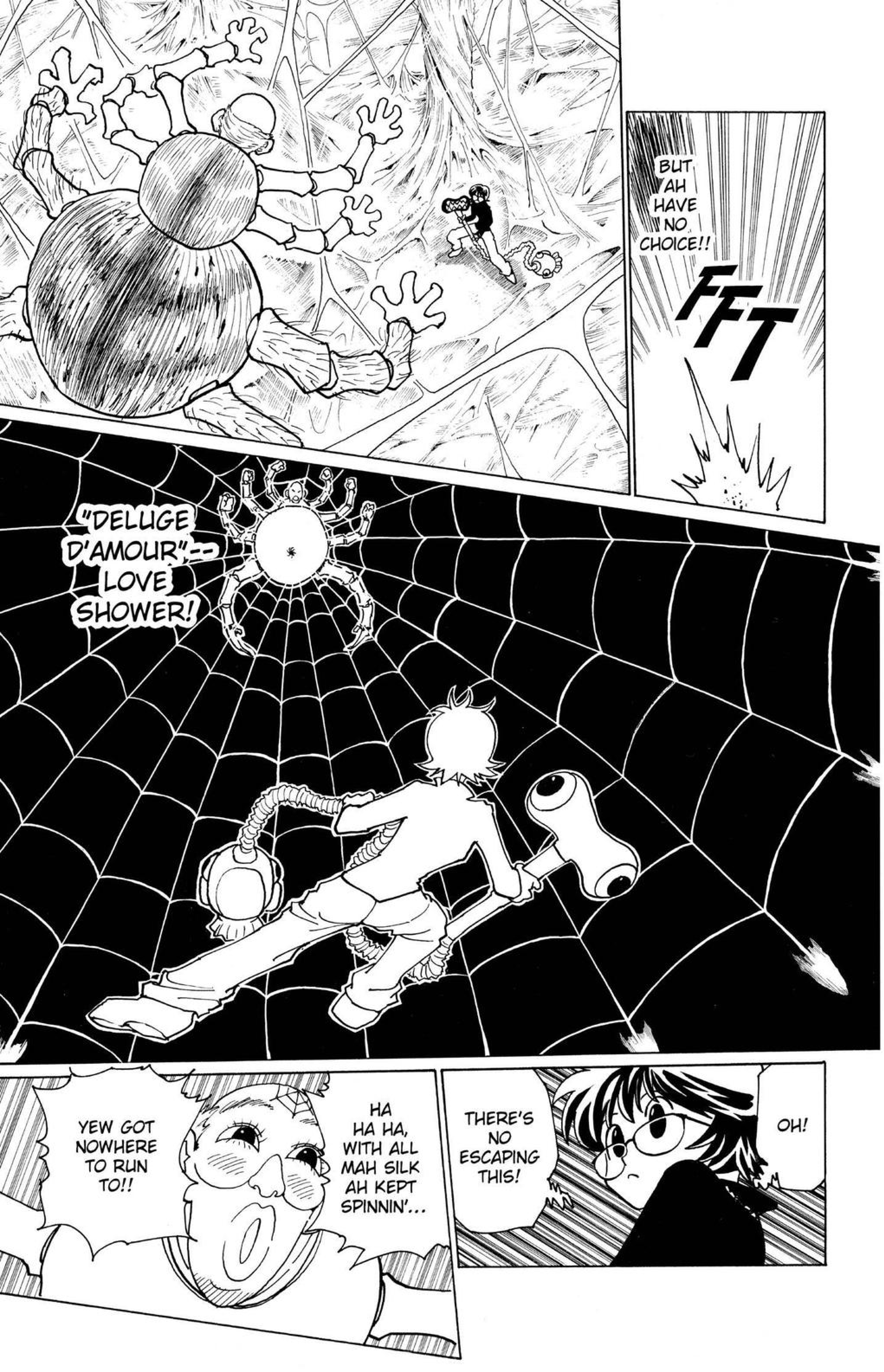

RMMM
AUTOPILOT: ON
WHA--
RMMM
WHAT THE HECK...
...IS ALL THIS AURA?!
R

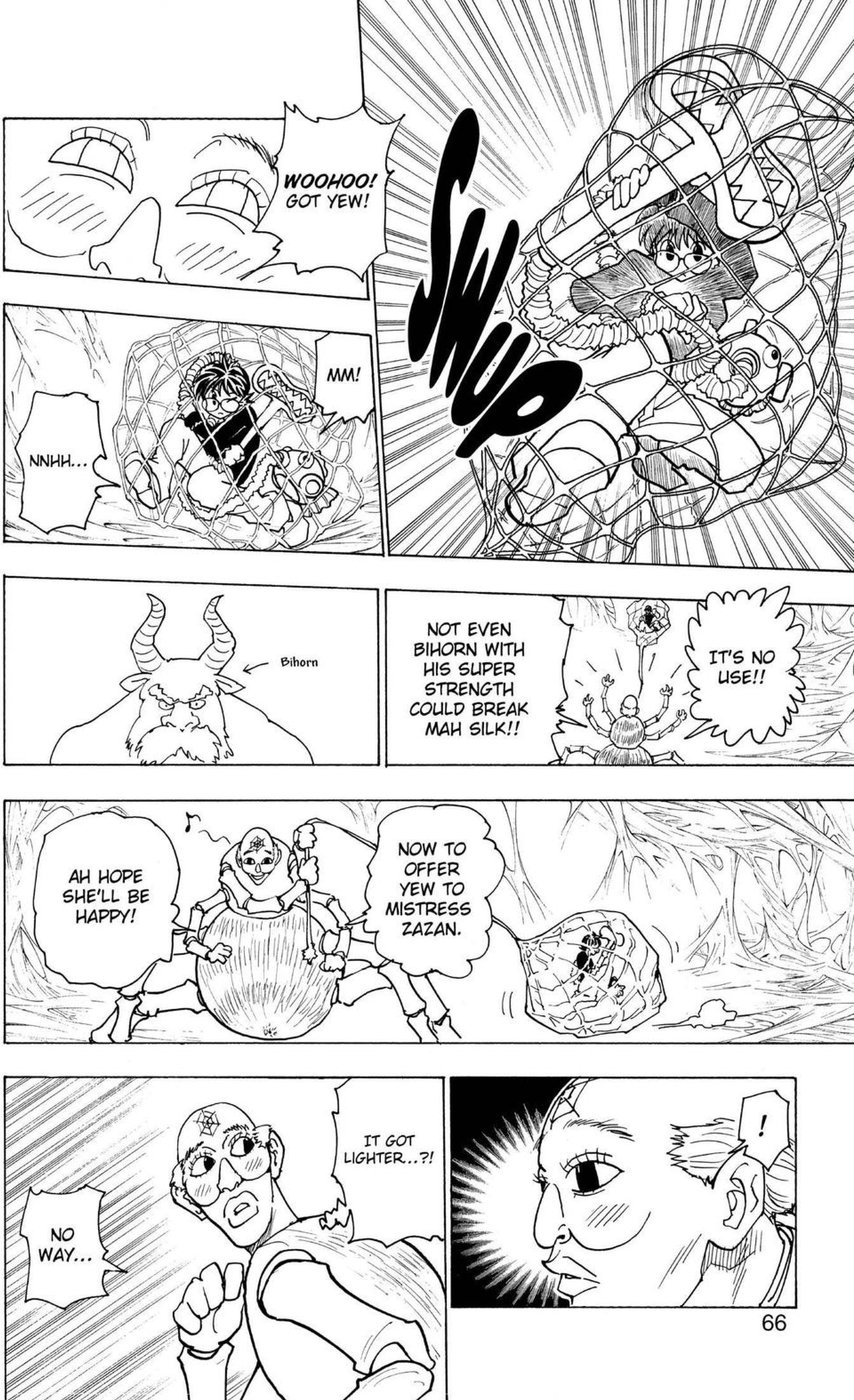

ENEMY SIGHTED.
KRK
TERMINATE TARGET.
GLARE
PELL, HIS LEG!!
GET THE ANTENNA--
WHOM

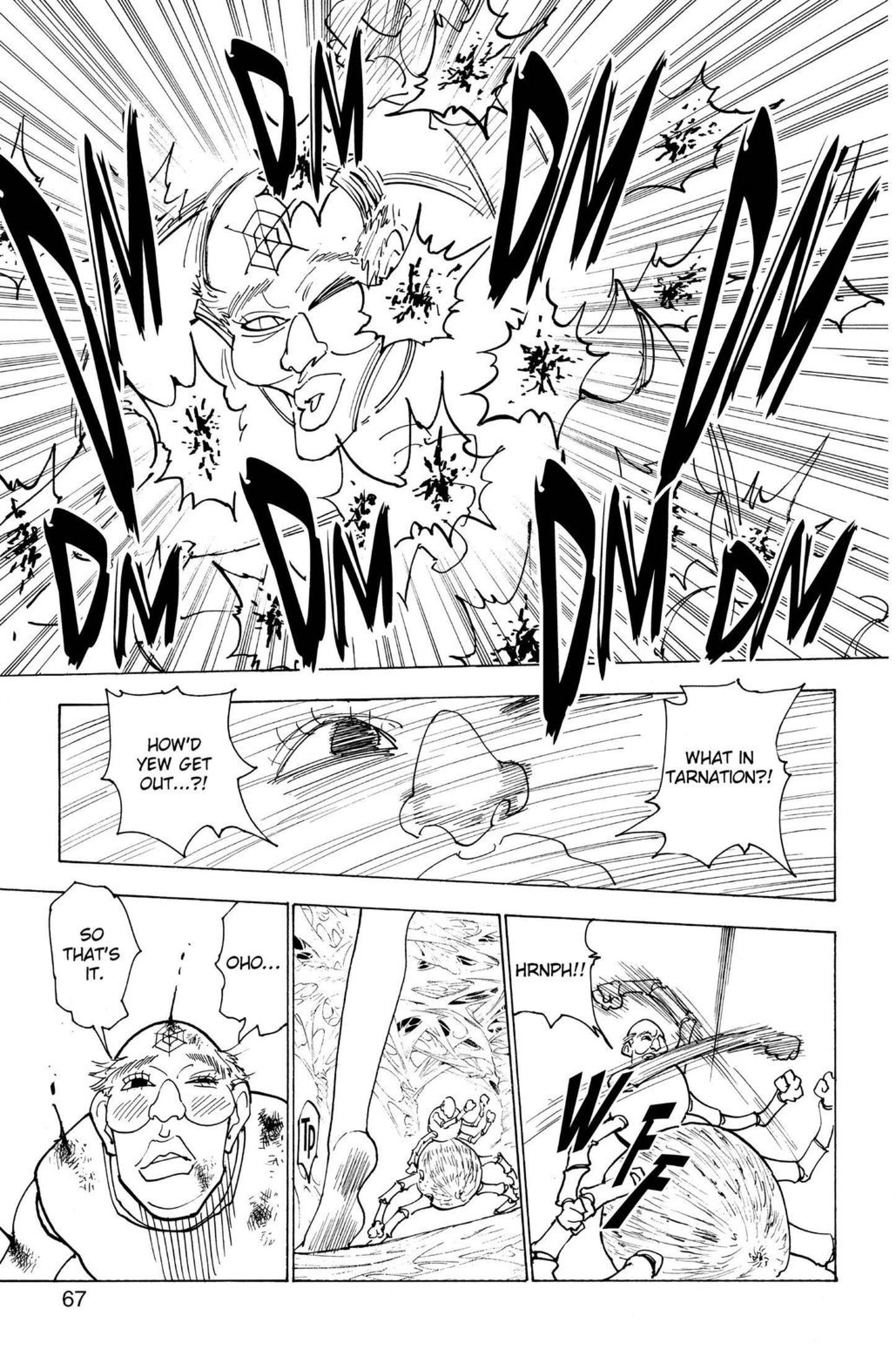
READ THIS WAY

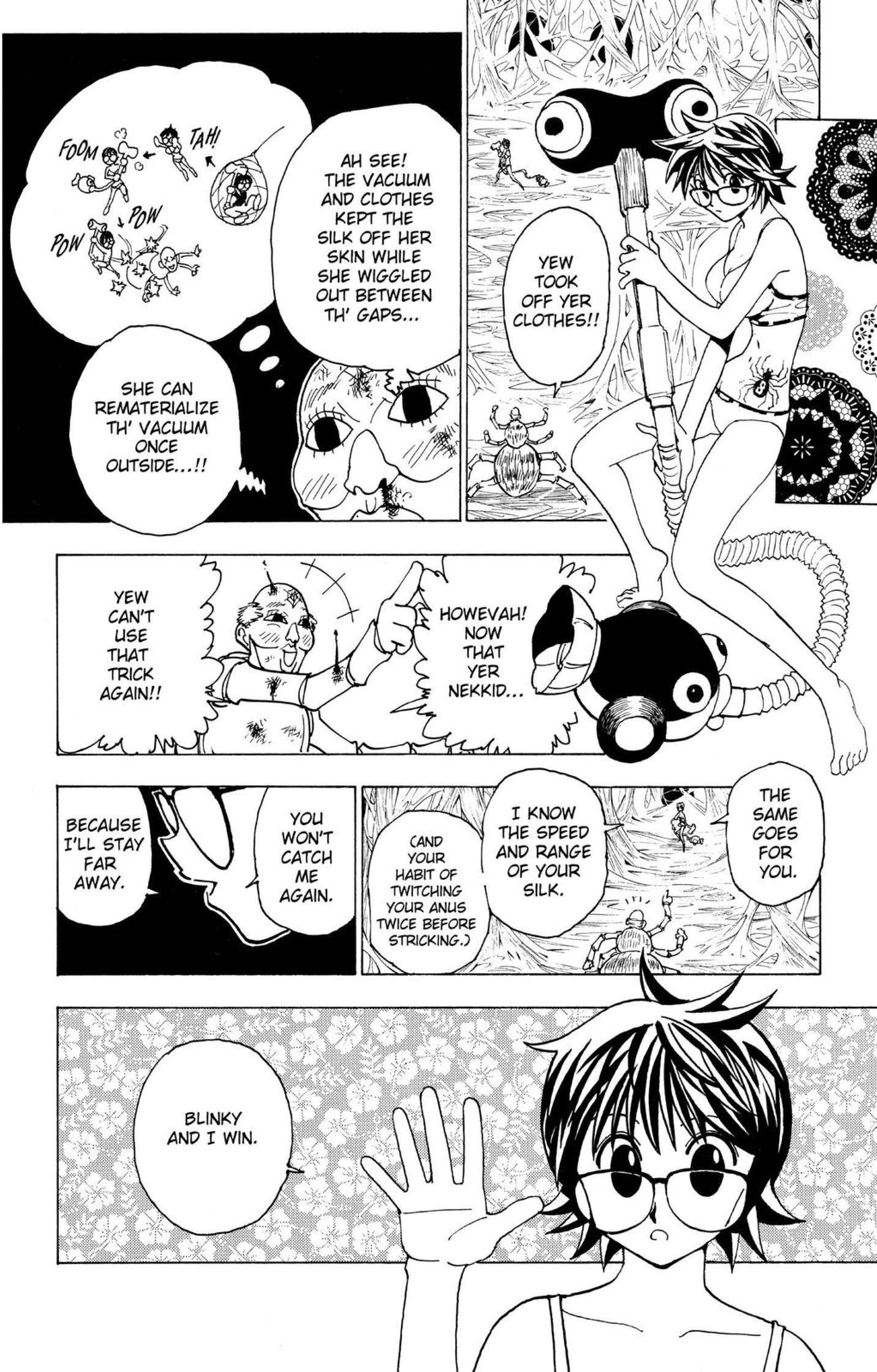

MISSION COMPLETED.
AUTOPILOT CANCELED.
SHUTTING DOWN.
BLIP
FSHH
...
OW...!
POK
I FEEL IT ALREADY.
KRK
I'LL BE TOO SORE TO MOVE FOR A COUPLE DAYS.
POP
KRAK
THIS IS WHY I HATE THIS MODE, EVEN THOUGH IT'S SO POWERFUL.
THE BACKLASH IS BAD...
...AND I DON'T REMEMBER A THING.
I NEVER FEEL A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

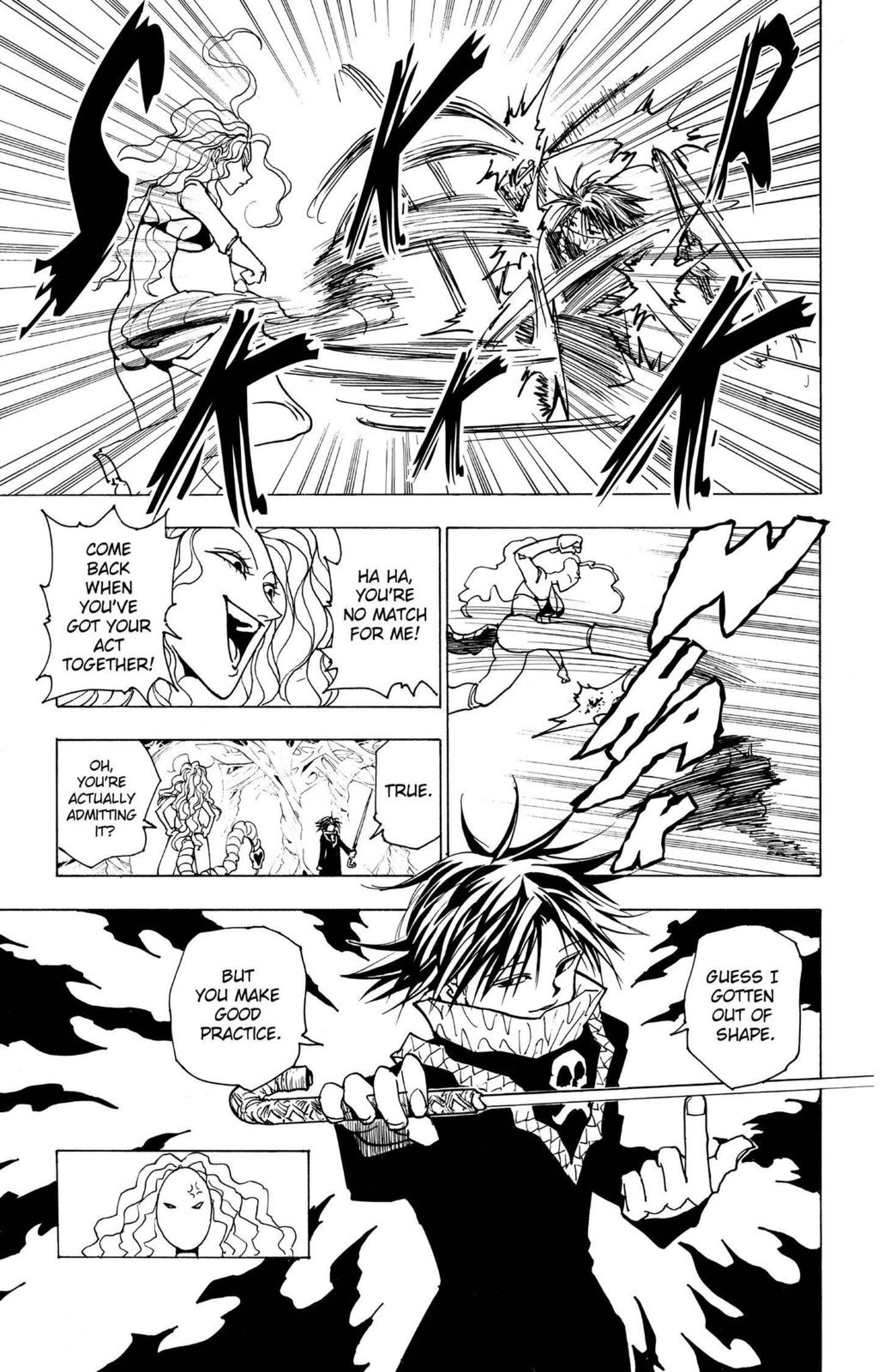

NO CHANCE TO ATTACK.
FOOM!!
HE'S FAST, WITH TWICE THE LIMBS THAT I HAVE...
I NEED AN OPENING...
FFT
SHE DID IT AGAIN!
THAT DANG VACUUM CAME OUTTA NOWHERE!!
MUST BE AN ABILITY TO MAKE STUFF APPEAR AT WILL...
IT'S SO PROFOUND!
AH'M HAVIN' A HARD TIME KETCHING HER WITH MY GOSSAMER.
BUT AH WON'T...
...LET HER ESCAPE!!
GRR
AH HATE TO DO THIS...
IT'S HARD ON MY BUTT...
TWIK TWIK

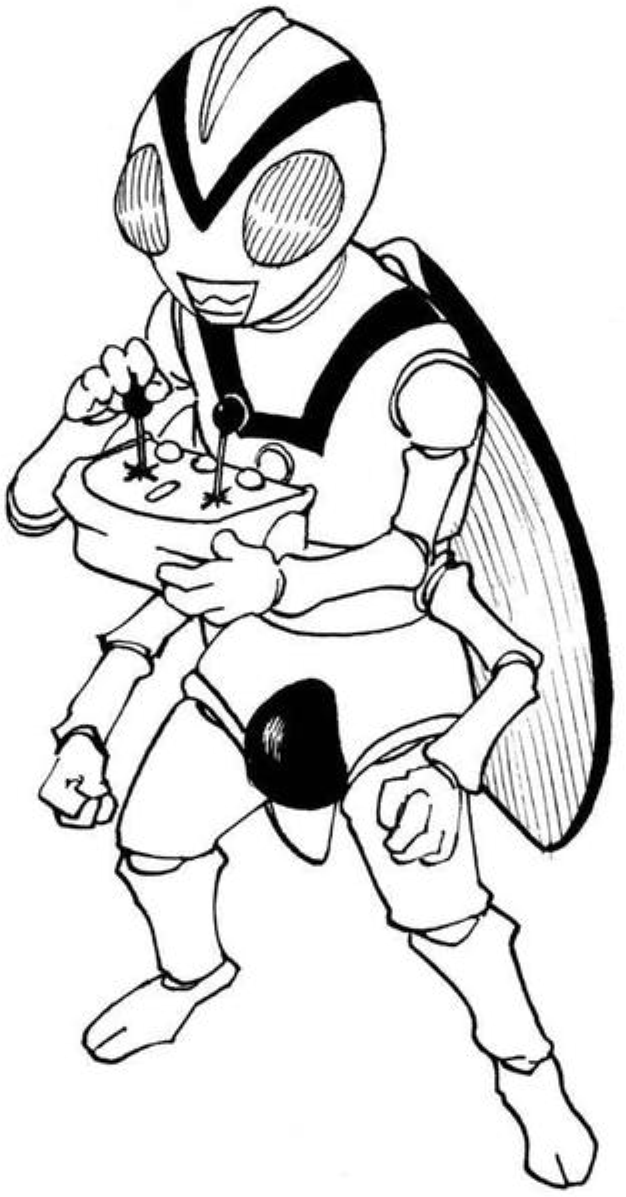

BUT AH HAVE NO CHOICE!!
FFT
"DELUGE D'AMOUR"-- LOVE SHOWER!
OH!
THERE'S NO ESCAPING THIS!
HA HA HA, WITH ALL MAH SILK AH KEPT SPINNIN'...
YEW GOT NOWHERE TO RUN TO!!


SWUP
WOOHOO! GOT YEW!
MM!
NNHH...
IT'S NO USE!!
NOT EVEN BIHORN WITH HIS SUPER STRENGTH COULD BREAK MAH SILK!!
Bihorn
NOW TO OFFER YEW TO MISTRESS ZAZAN.
AH HOPE SHE'LL BE HAPPY!
!
IT GOT LIGHTER...?!
NO WAY...

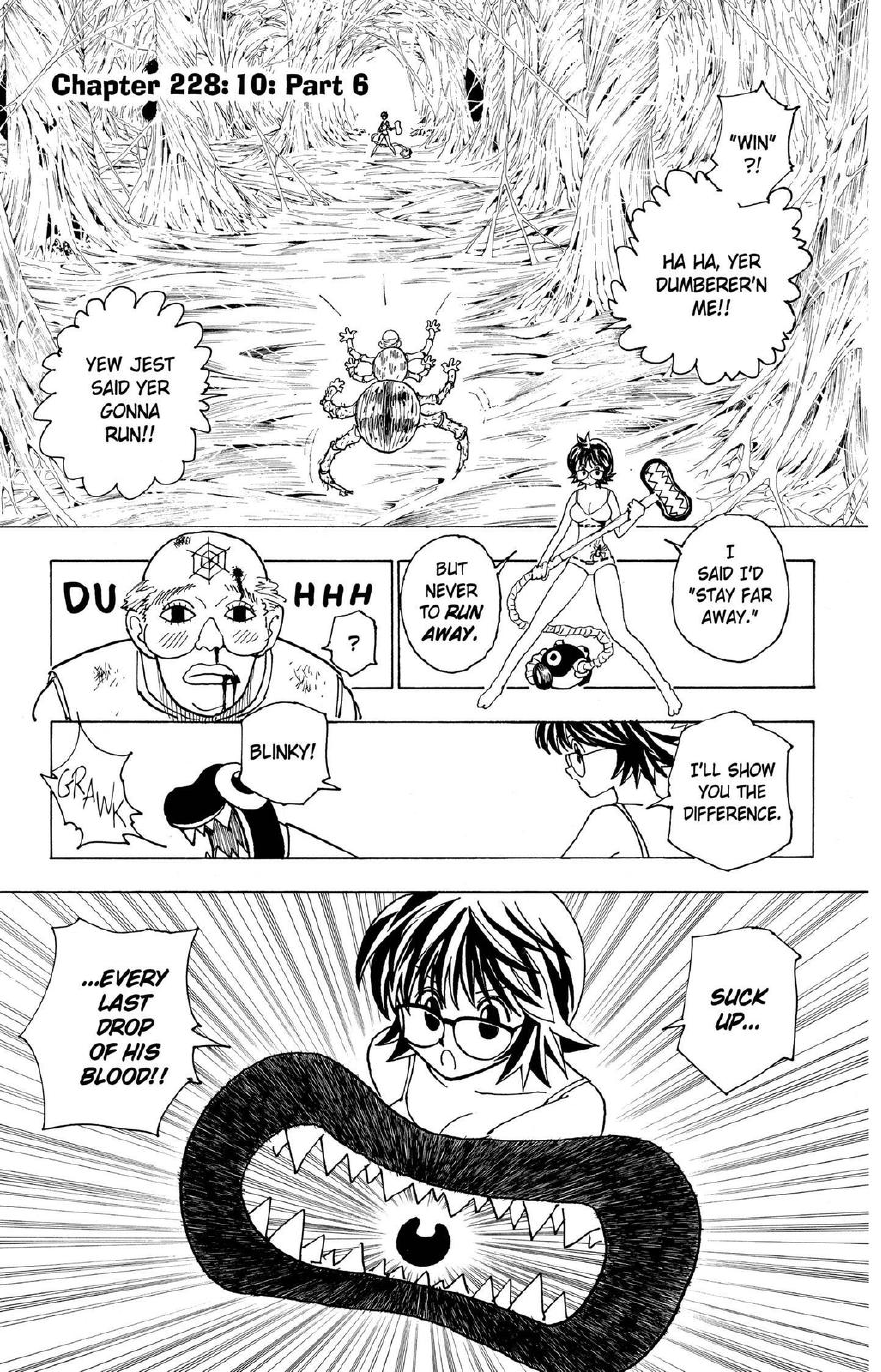

DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM DM
WHAT IN TARNATION?!
HOW'D YEW GET OUT...?!
HRNPH!!
WFF
TP
OHO...
SO THAT'S IT.

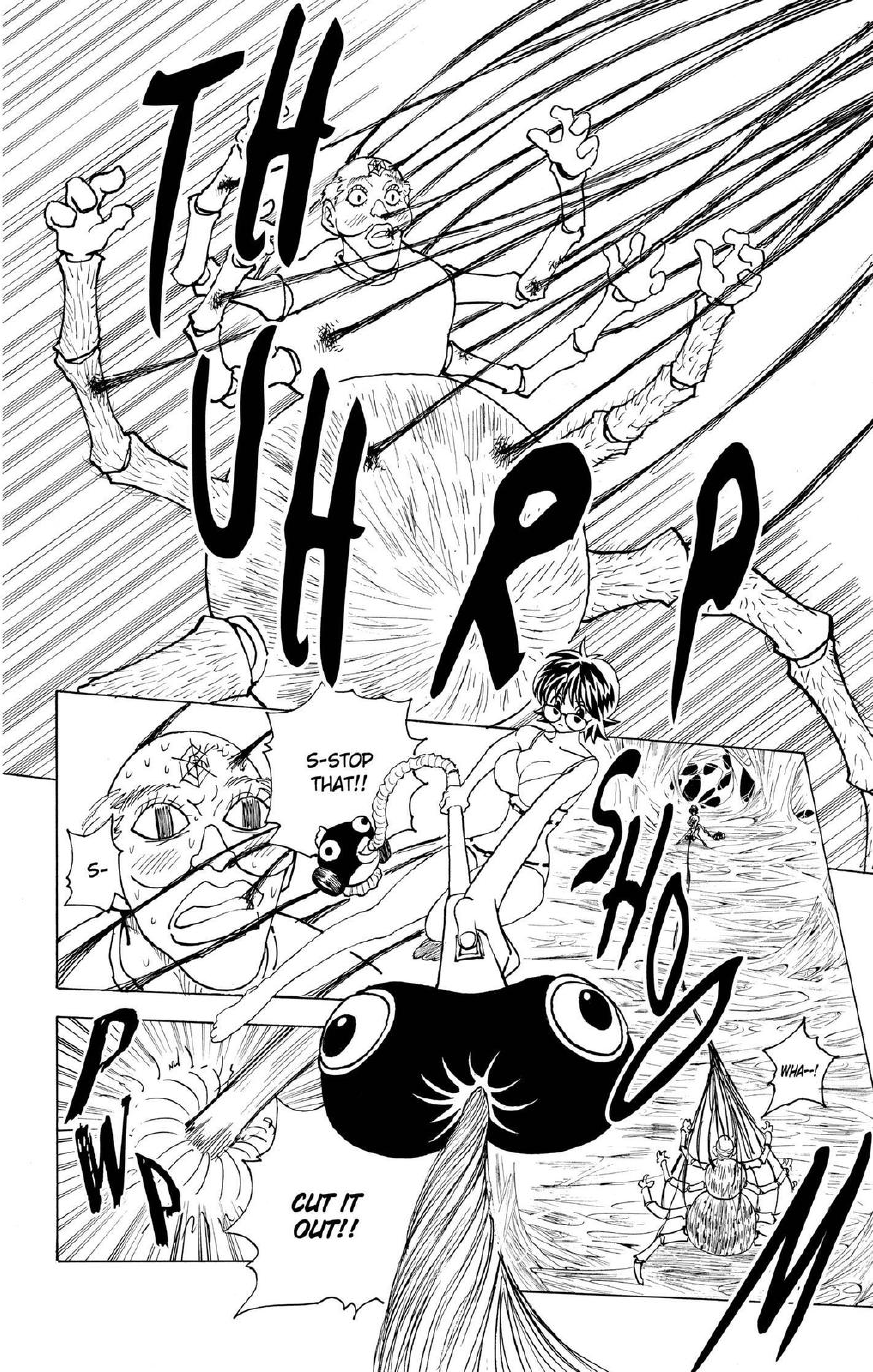

YEW TOOK OFF YER CLOTHES!!
TAH!
FOOM
POW POW
AH SEE! THE VACUUM AND CLOTHES KEPT THE SILK OFF HER SKIN WHILE SHE WIGGLED OUT BETWEEN TH' GAPS...
SHE CAN REMATERIALIZE TH' VACUUM ONCE OUTSIDE...!!
HOWEVAH! NOW THAT YER NEKKID...
YEW CAN'T USE THAT TRICK AGAIN!!
THE SAME GOES FOR YOU.
I KNOW THE SPEED AND RANGE OF YOUR SILK.
(AND YOUR HABIT OF TWITCHING YOUR ANUS TWICE BEFORE STRICKING.)
YOU WON'T CATCH ME AGAIN.
BECAUSE I'LL STAY FAR AWAY.
BLINKY AND I WIN.

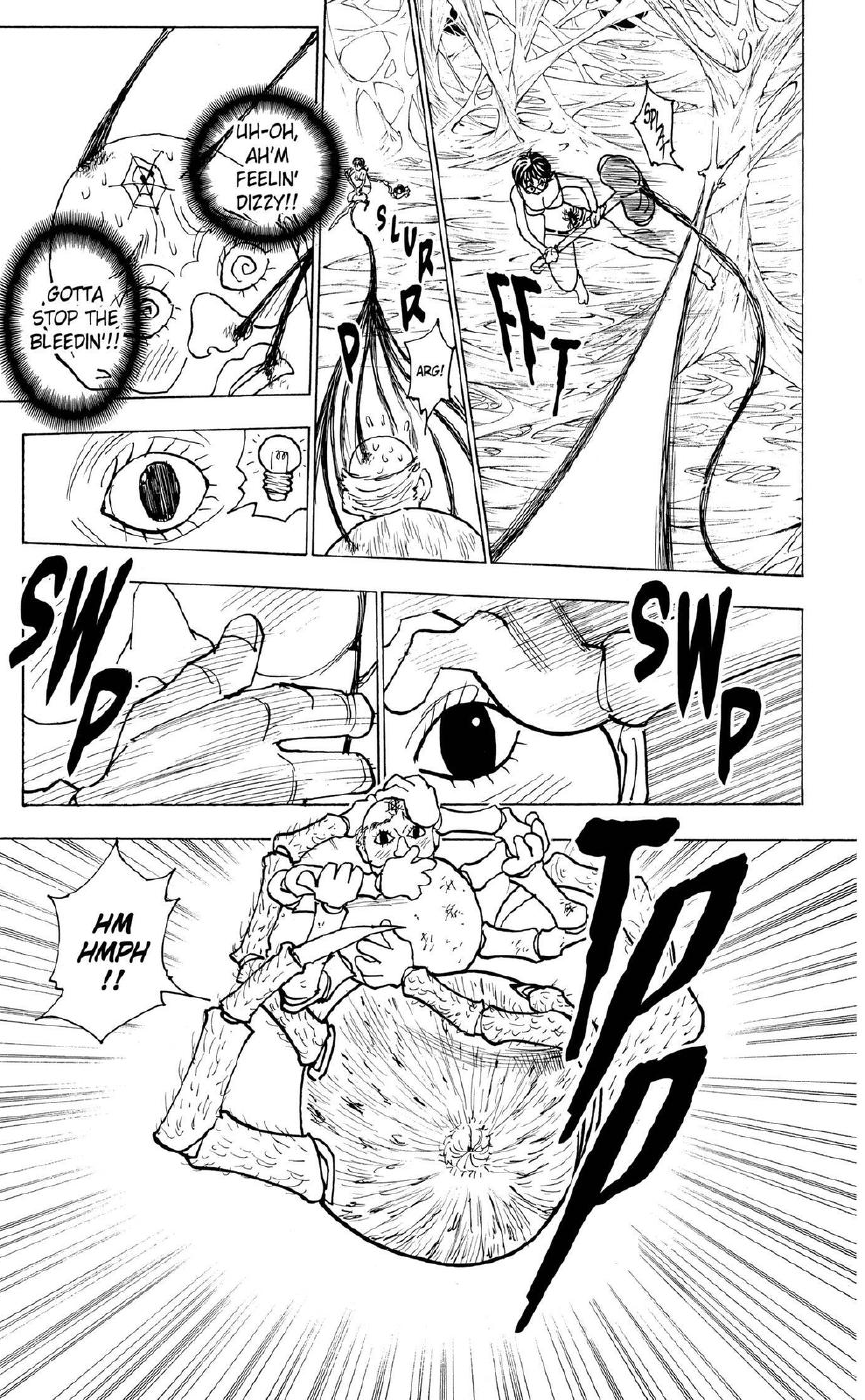

SKKRKKK
WHAK
HA HA, YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME!
COME BACK WHEN YOU'VE GOT YOUR ACT TOGETHER!
TRUE.
OH, YOU'RE ACTUALLY ADMITTING IT?
GUESS I GOTTEN OUT OF SHAPE.
BUT YOU MAKE GOOD PRACTICE.

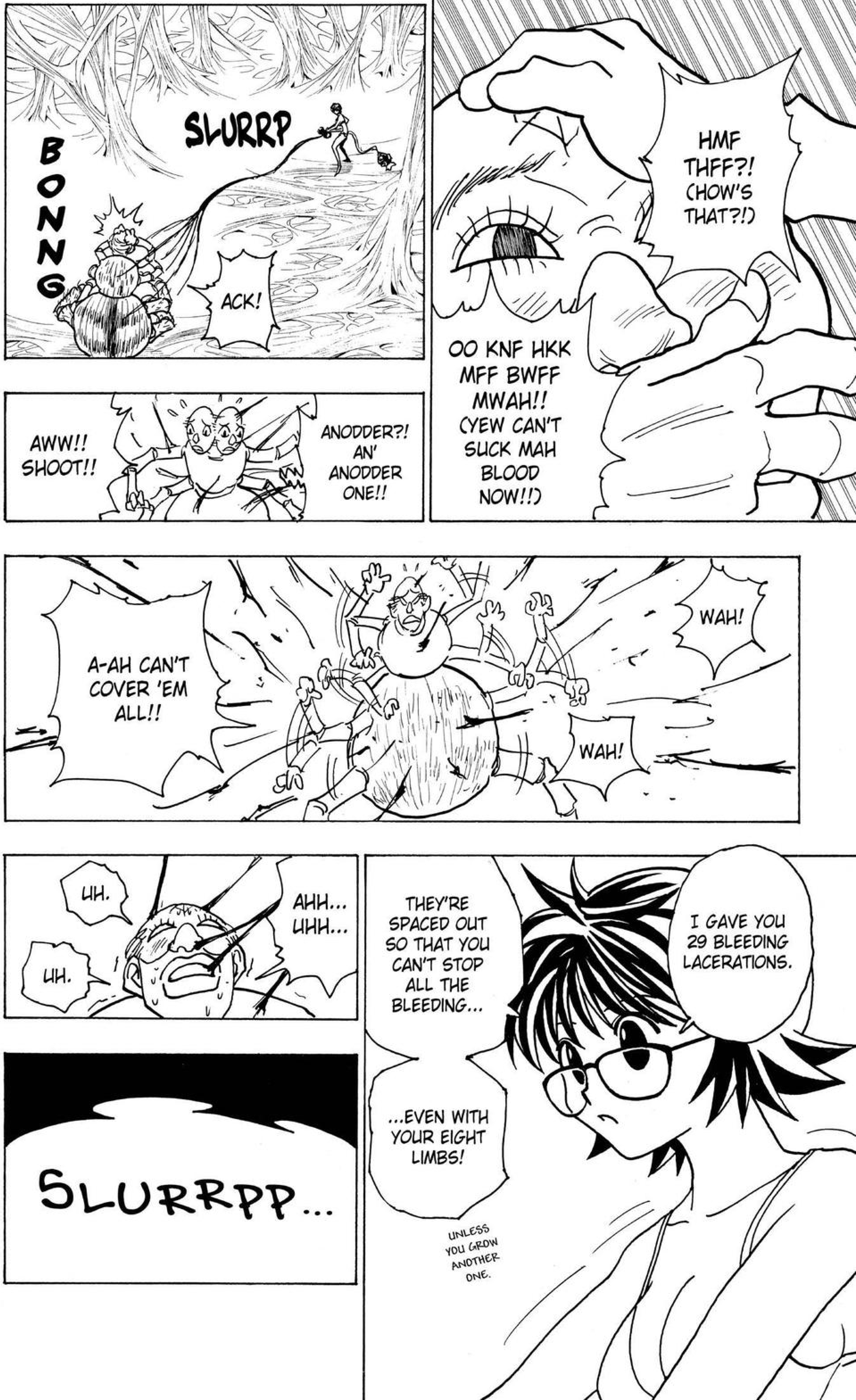


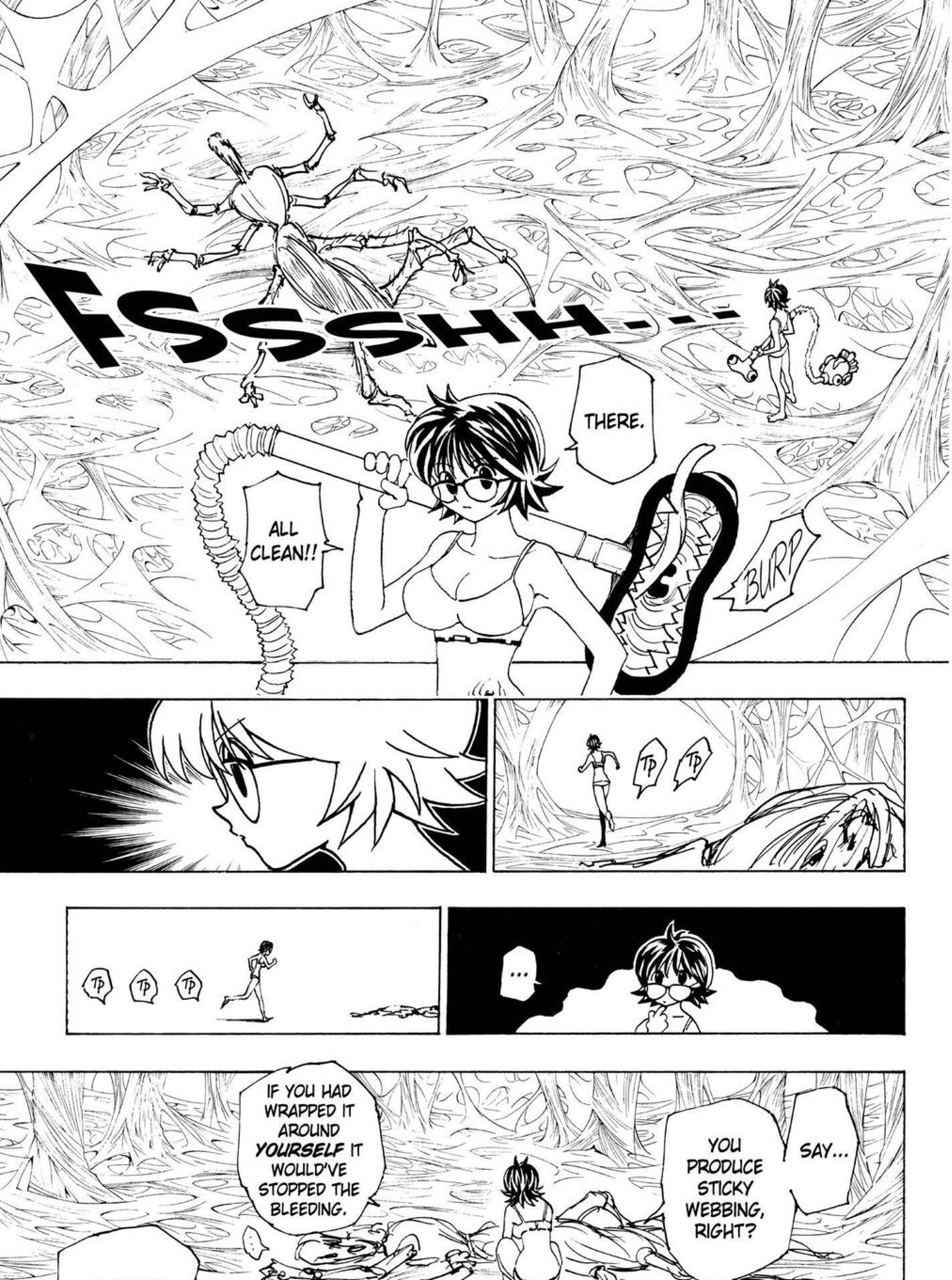
Chapter 228: 10: Part 6

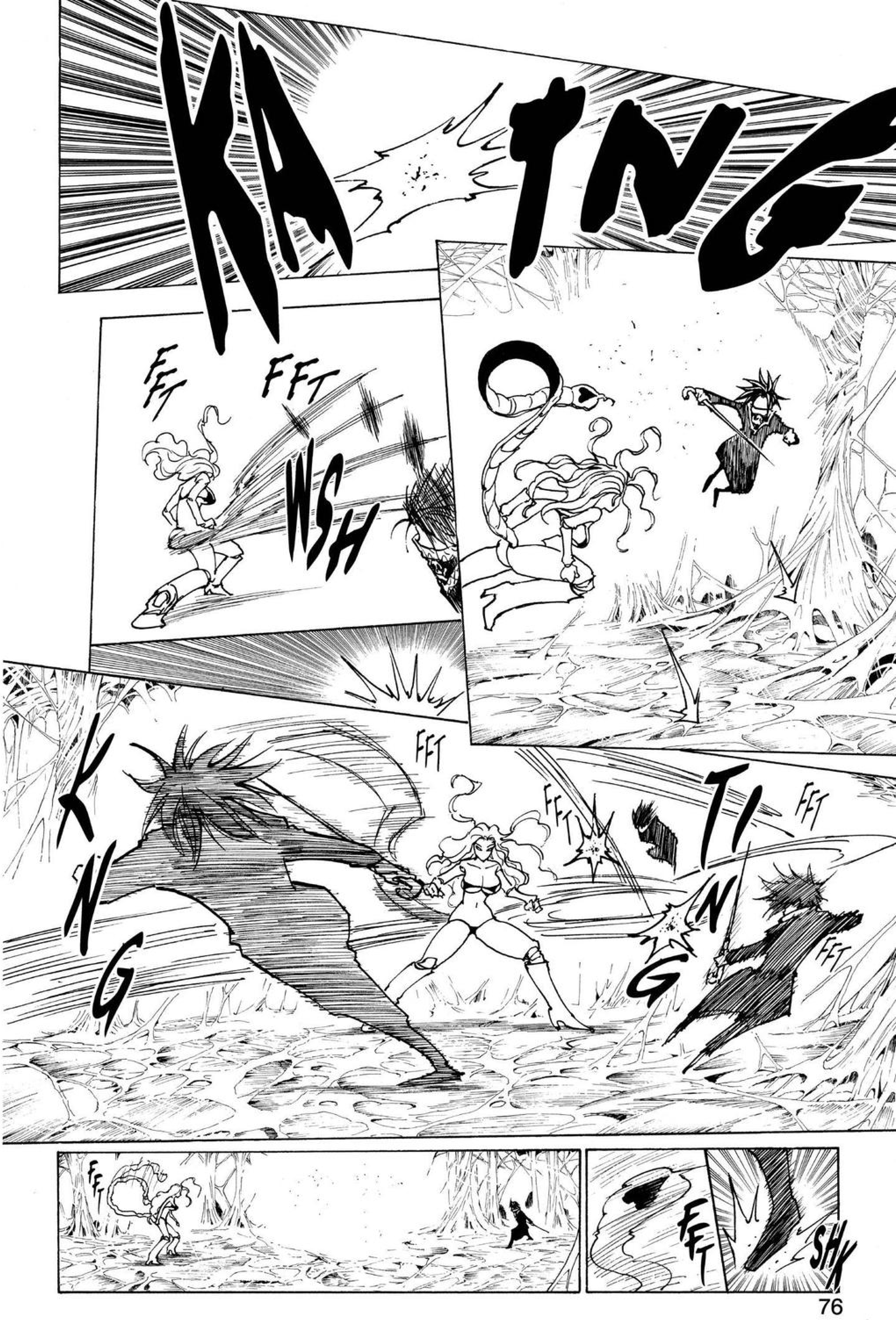

"WIN" ?!
HA HA, YER DUMBERER'N ME!!
YEW JEST SAID YER GONNA RUN!!
I SAID I'D "STAY FAR AWAY."
BUT NEVER TO RUN AWAY.
?
DUHHH
I'LL SHOW YOU THE DIFFERENCE.
BLINKY!
GRAWK
SUCK UP...
...EVERY LAST DROP OF HIS BLOOD!!

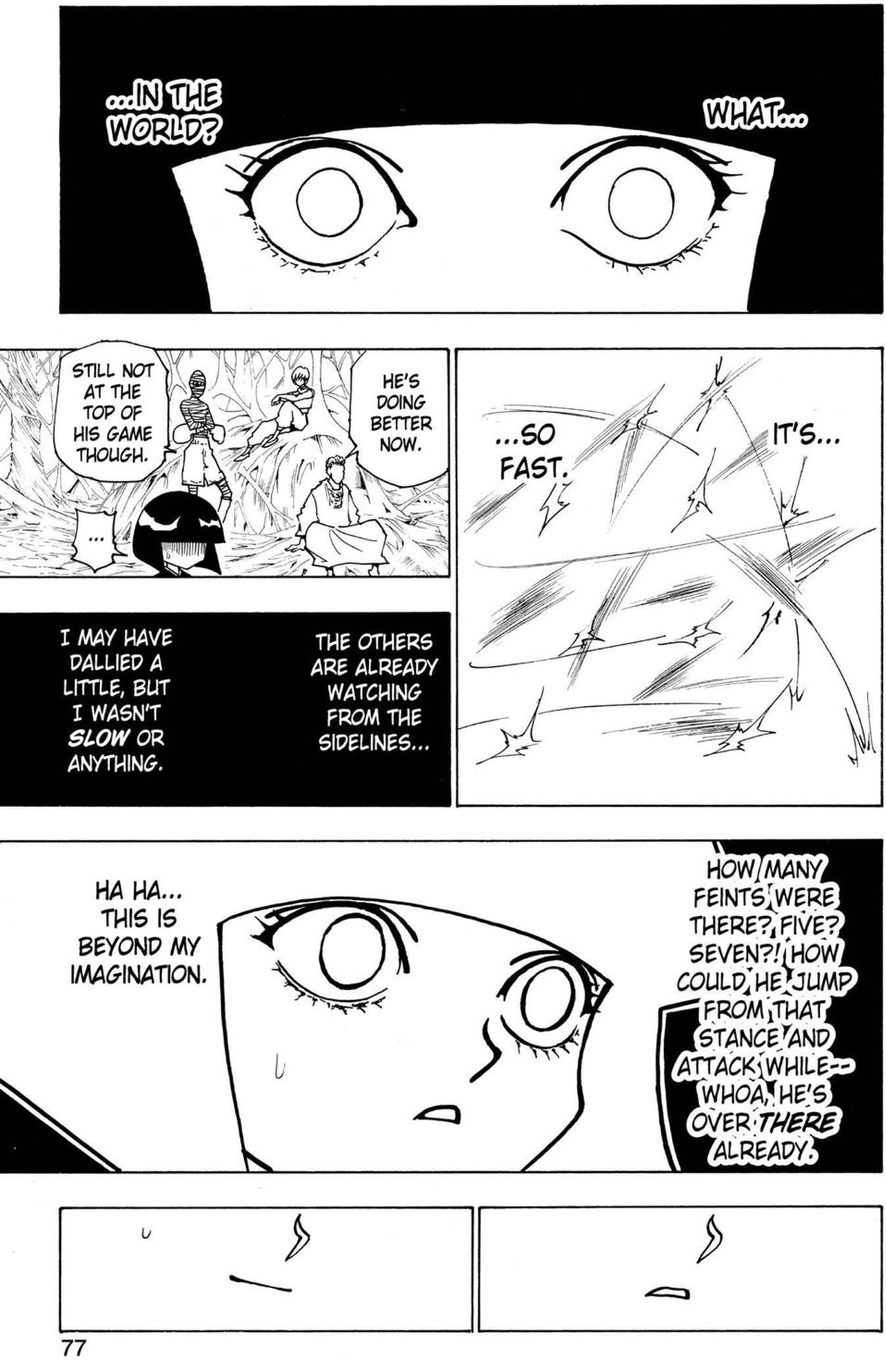

THUHRP
WHA--!
SHOOM
S-
S-STOP THAT!!
PWP
CUT IT OUT!!

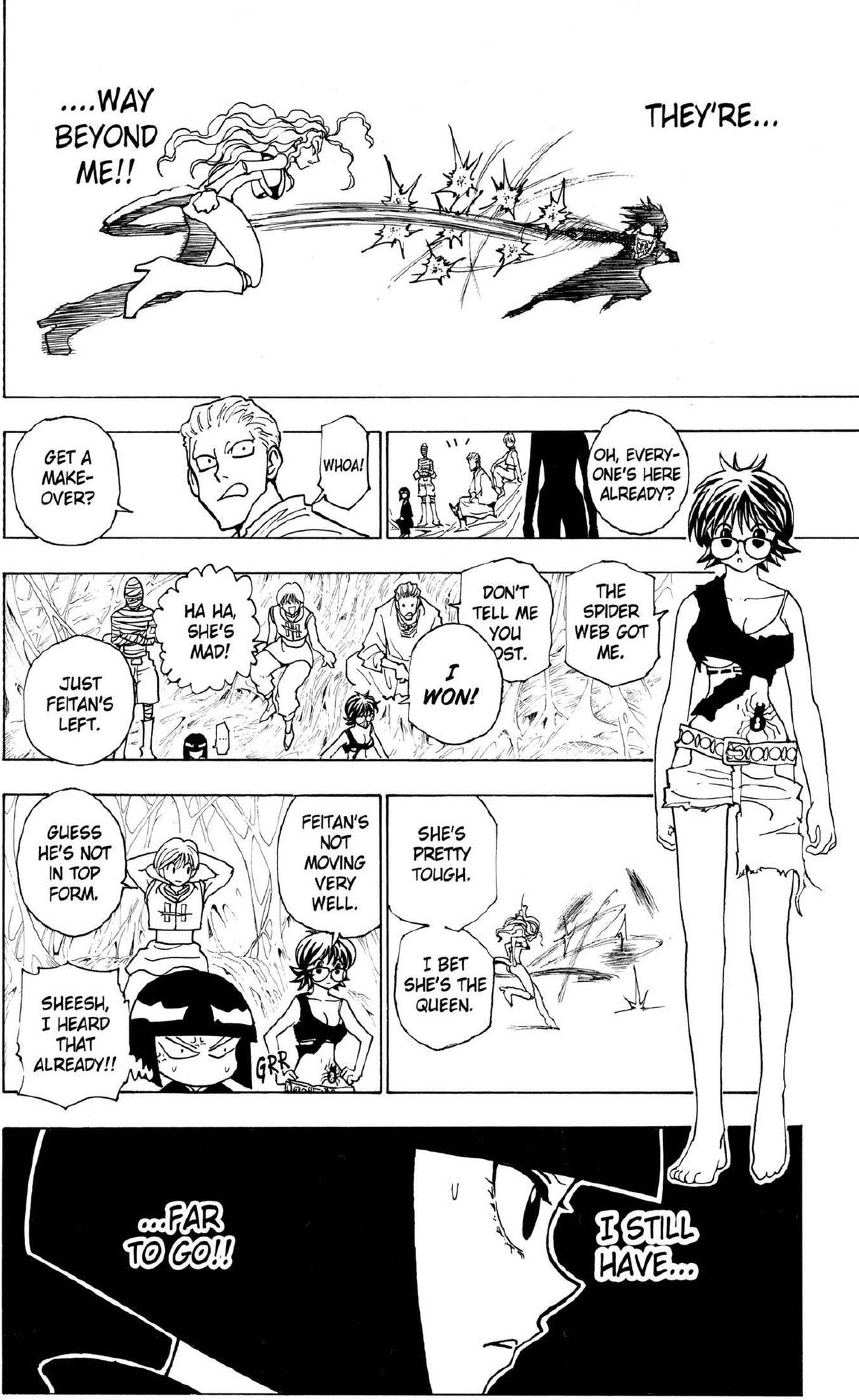

SPLAT
FFFT
SLURRP
ARG!
UH-OH, AH'M FEELIN' DIZZY!!
GOTTA STOP THE BLEEDIN'!!
SWP
SWP
TPP
HM HMPH!!

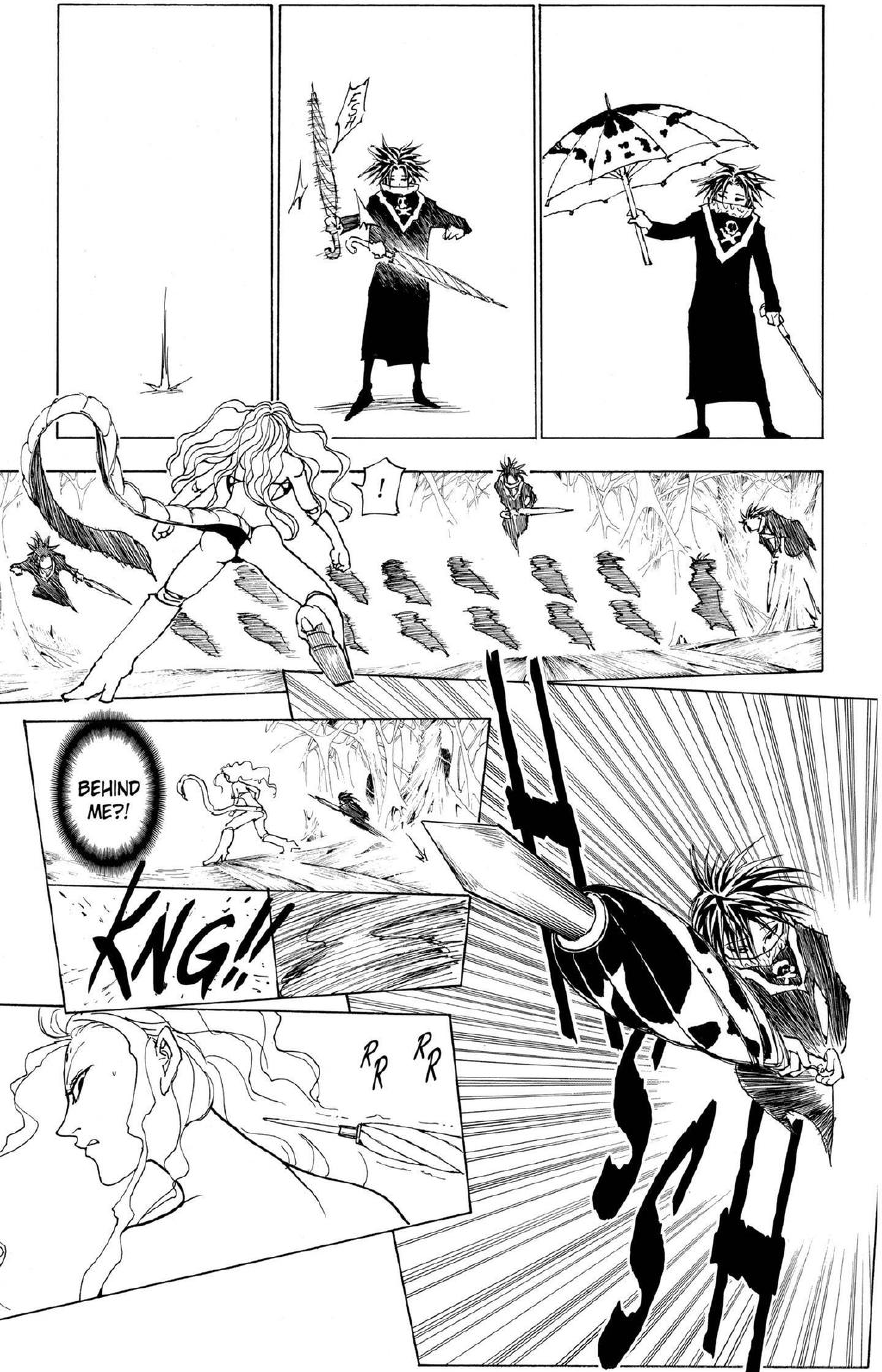

HMF THFF?! (HOW'S THAT?!)
OO KNF HKK MFF BWFF MWAH!! (YEW CAN'T SUCK MAH BLOOD NOW!!)
SLURRP
BONNG
ACK!
ANODDER?! AN' ANODDER ONE!!
AWW!! SHOOT!!
WAH!
WAH!
A-AH CAN'T COVER 'EM ALL!!
I GAVE YOU 29 BLEEDING LACERATIONS.
THEY'RE SPACED OUT SO THAT YOU CAN'T STOP ALL THE BLEEDING...
...EVEN WITH YOUR EIGHT LIMBS!
UNLESS YOU GROW ANOTHER ONE.
AHH... UHH...
UH.
UH.
SLURRPP...

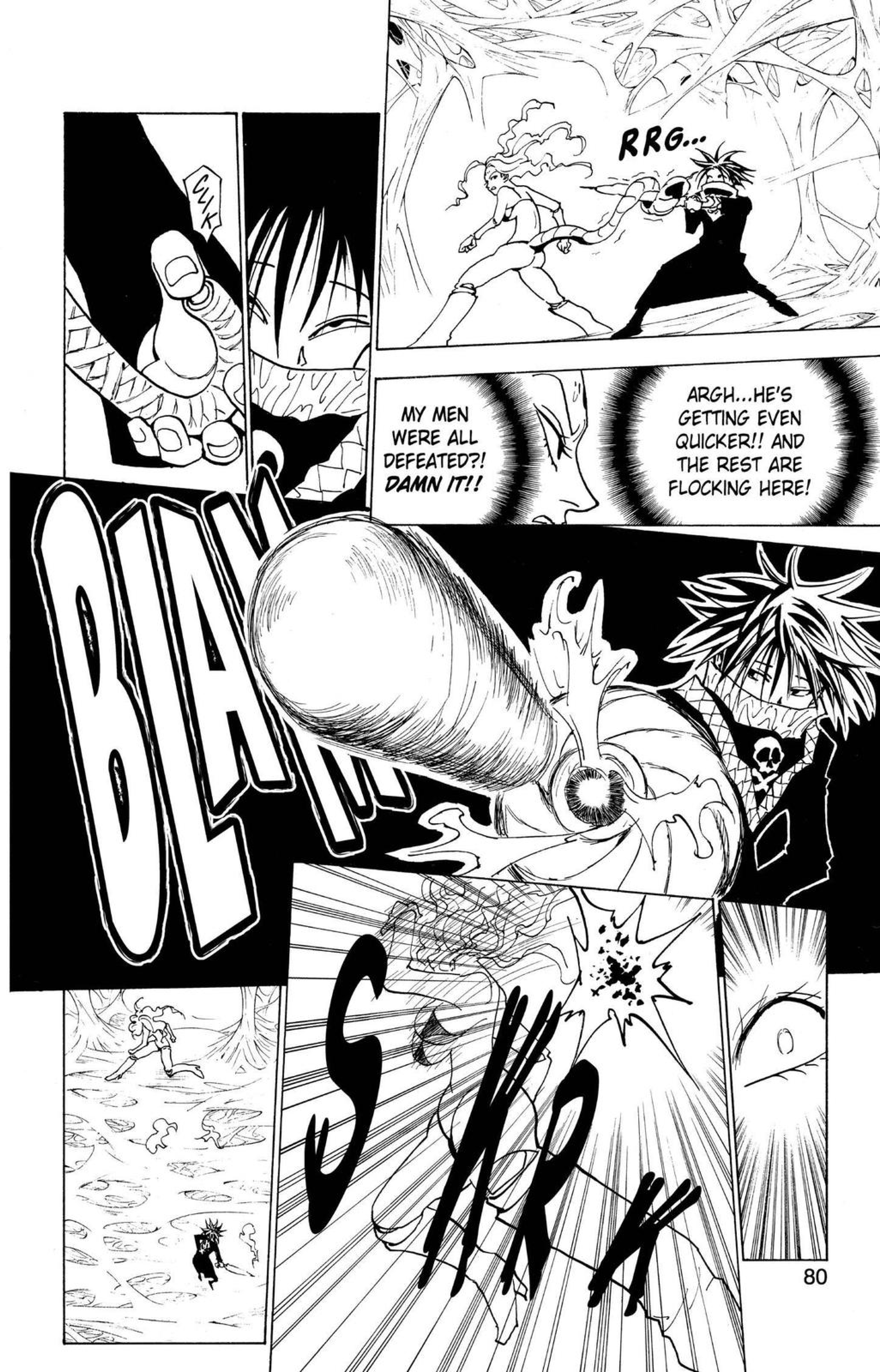

FSSSHH...
THERE.
ALL CLEAN!!
BURP
TP TP
TP TP TP
...
SAY...
YOU PRODUCE STICKY WEBBING, RIGHT?
IF YOU HAD WRAPPED IT AROUND *YOURSELF* IT WOULD'VE STOPPED THE BLEEDING.
...
I GUESS WE'RE *BOTH* STUPID, HUH?

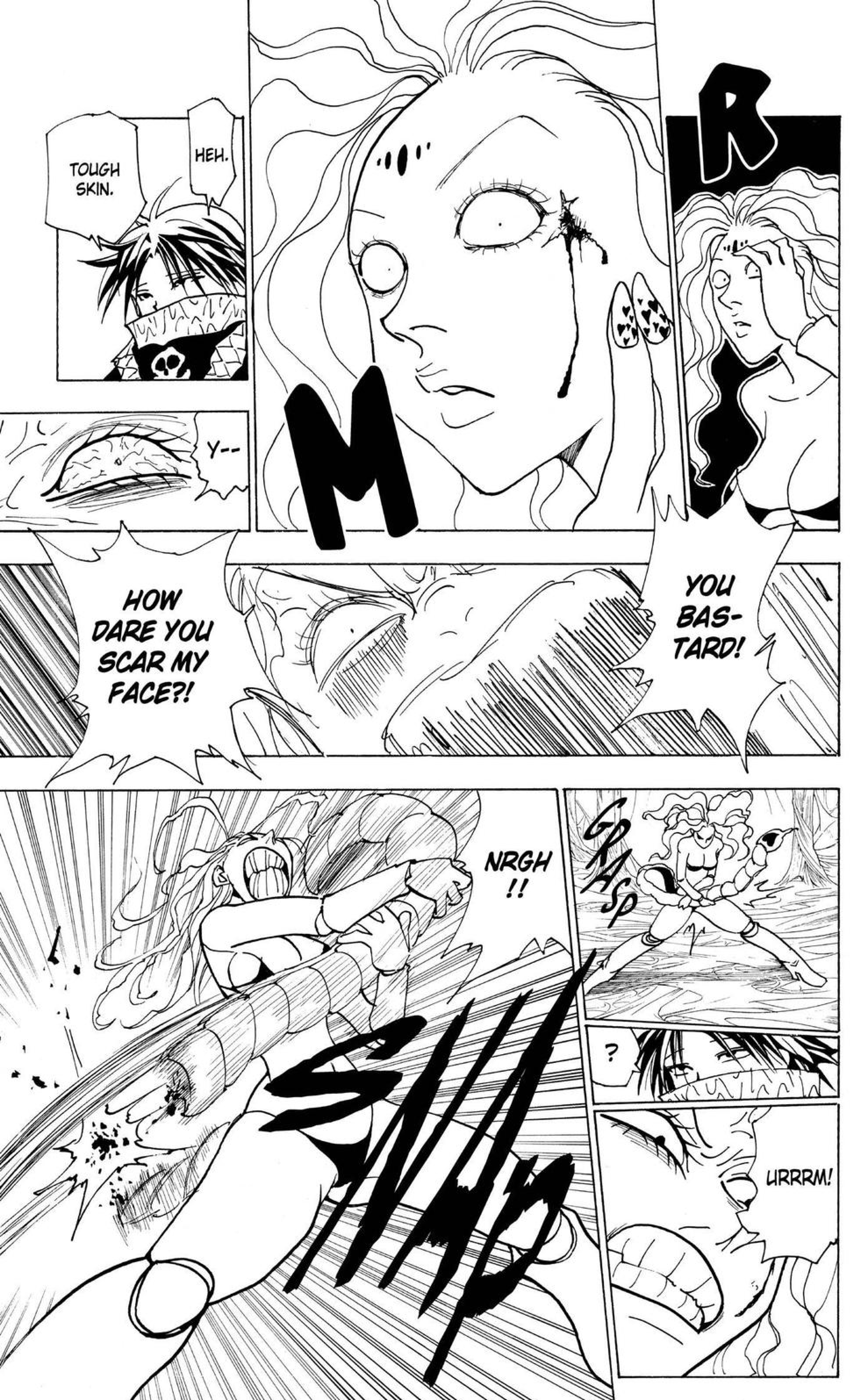

KA TNG
WSH
FFT
FFT
FFT
TI N G
FFT
FFT
FFT
K N G
FFT
SHK
FFT
FFT

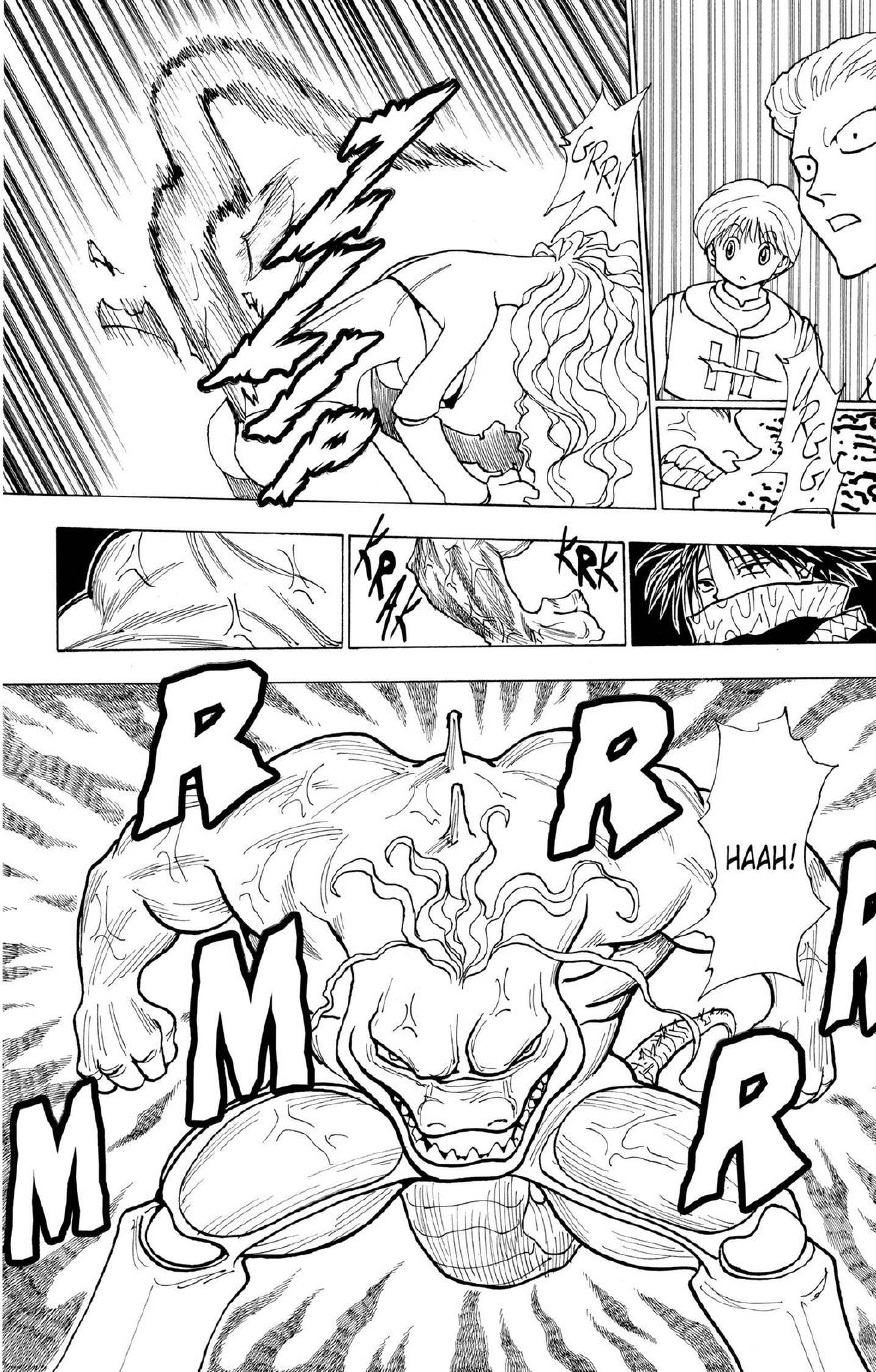

WHAT...
...IN THE WORLD?
IT'S...
...SO FAST.
HE'S DOING BETTER NOW.
STILL NOT AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME THOUGH.
...
THE OTHERS ARE ALREADY WATCHING FROM THE SIDELINES...
I MAY HAVE DALLIED A LITTLE, BUT I WASN'T *SLOW* OR ANYTHING.
HOW MANY FEINTS WERE THERE? FIVE? SEVEN?! HOW COULD HE JUMP FROM THAT STANCE AND ATTACK WHILE-- WHOA, HE'S OVER *THERE* ALREADY.
HA HA... THIS IS BEYOND MY IMAGINATION.

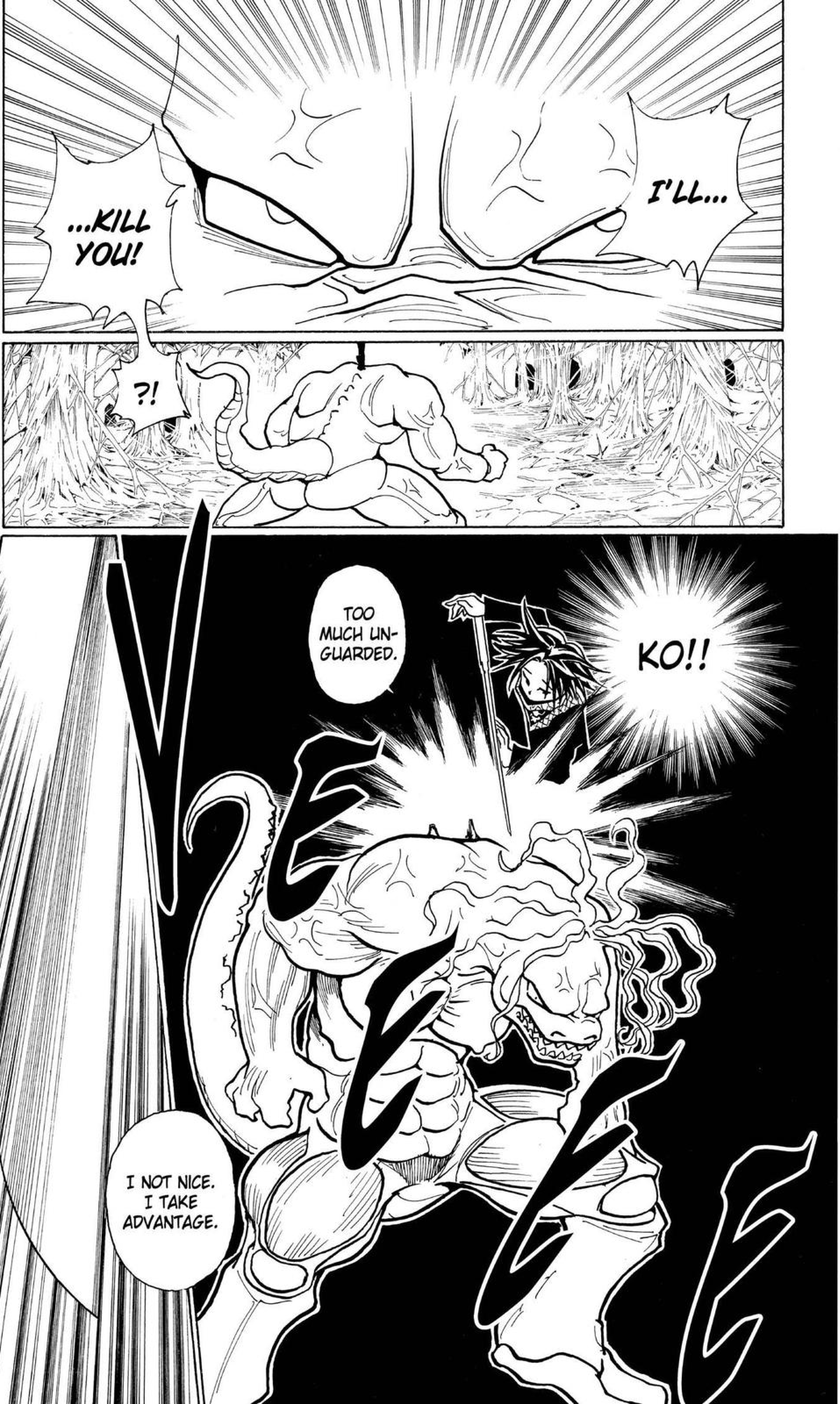

THEY'RE...
....WAY BEYOND ME!!
OH, EVERY-ONE'S HERE ALREADY?
WHOA!
GET A MAKE-OVER?
THE SPIDER WEB GOT ME.
DON'T TELL ME YOU OST.
I WON!
HA HA, SHE'S MAD!
JUST FEITAN'S LEFT.
...
SHE'S PRETTY TOUGH.
I BET SHE'S THE QUEEN.
FEITAN'S NOT MOVING VERY WELL.
GUESS HE'S NOT IN TOP FORM.
SHEESH, I HEARD THAT ALREADY!!
GRR
I STILL HAVE...
...FAR TO GO!!

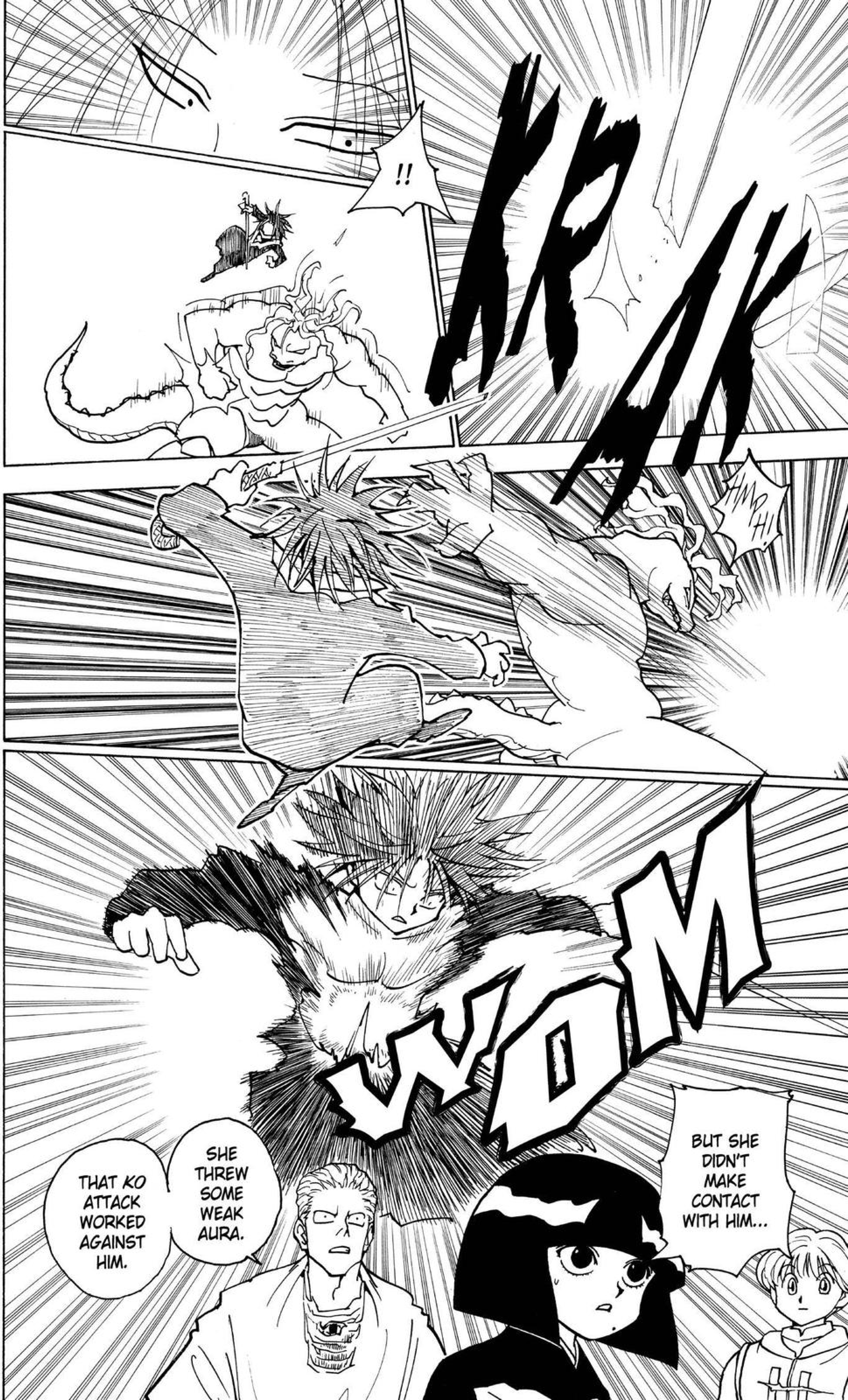

FSH
!
BEHIND ME?!
KNG!!
SH
RR RR

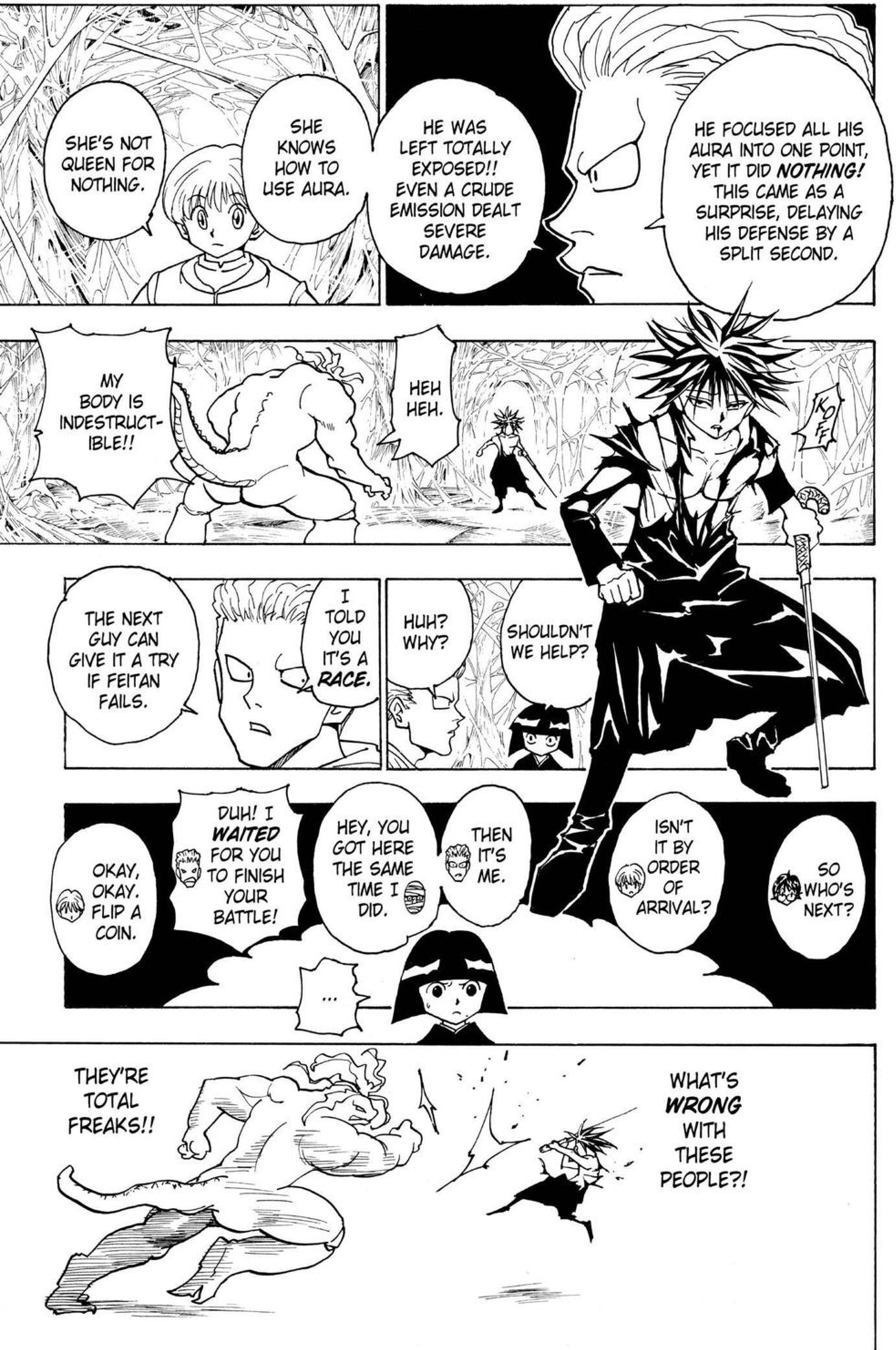

RRG...
CLIK
ARGH...HE'S GETTING EVEN QUICKER!! AND THE REST ARE FLOCKING HERE!
MY MEN WERE ALL DEFEATED?! *DAMN IT!!*
BLAM
SHRRK


R
M
HEH.
TOUGH SKIN.
Y--
YOU BASTARD!
HOW DARE YOU SCAR MY FACE?!
GRASP
?
URRRM!
NRGH!!
SNAP

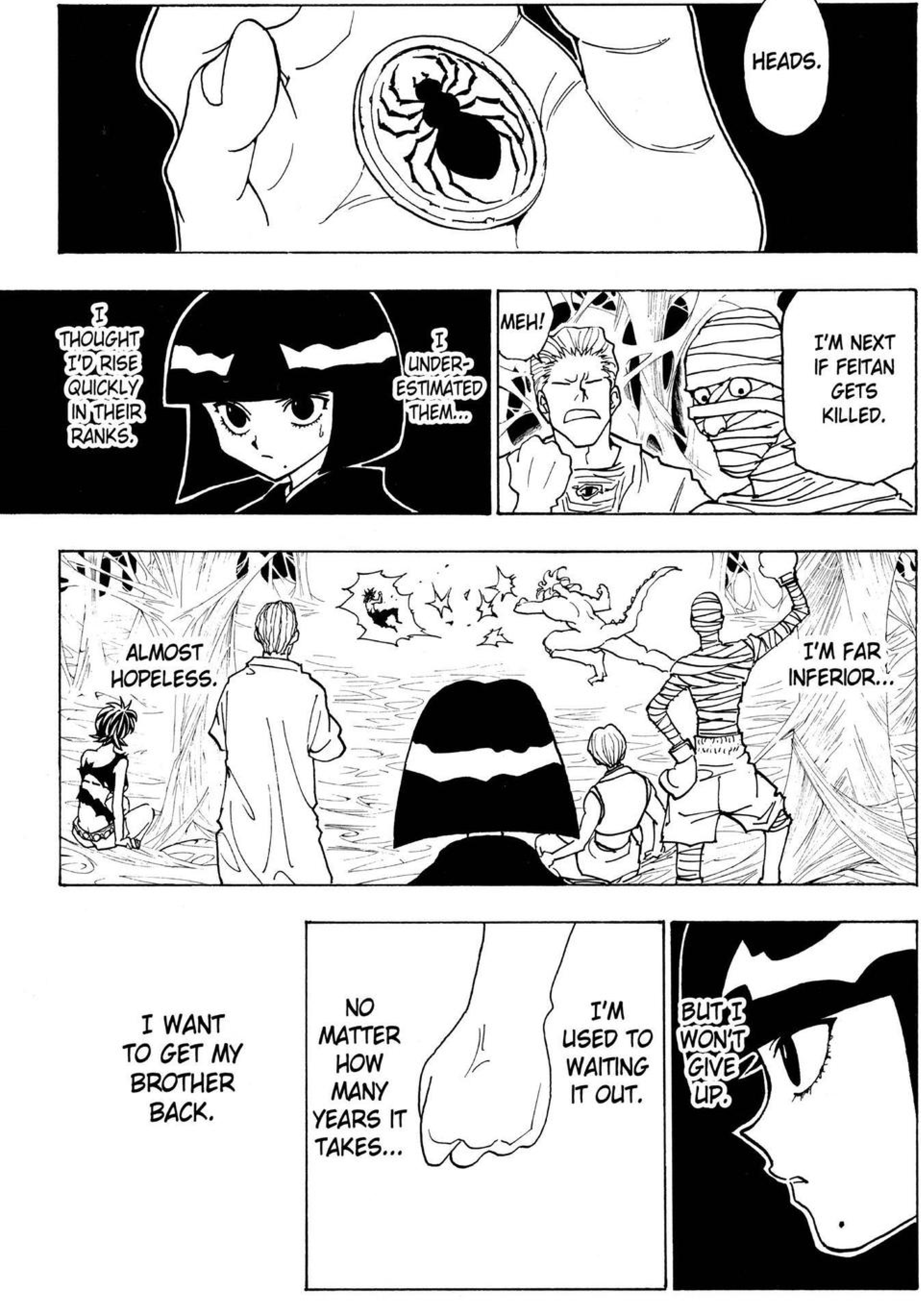

GRR!
WRGG!
KRK
KRAK
HAAH!
RRRR
MM


I'LL...
...KILL YOU!
?!
KO!!
TOO MUCH UN-GUARDED.
VEEEEE
I NOT NICE. I TAKE ADVANTAGE.

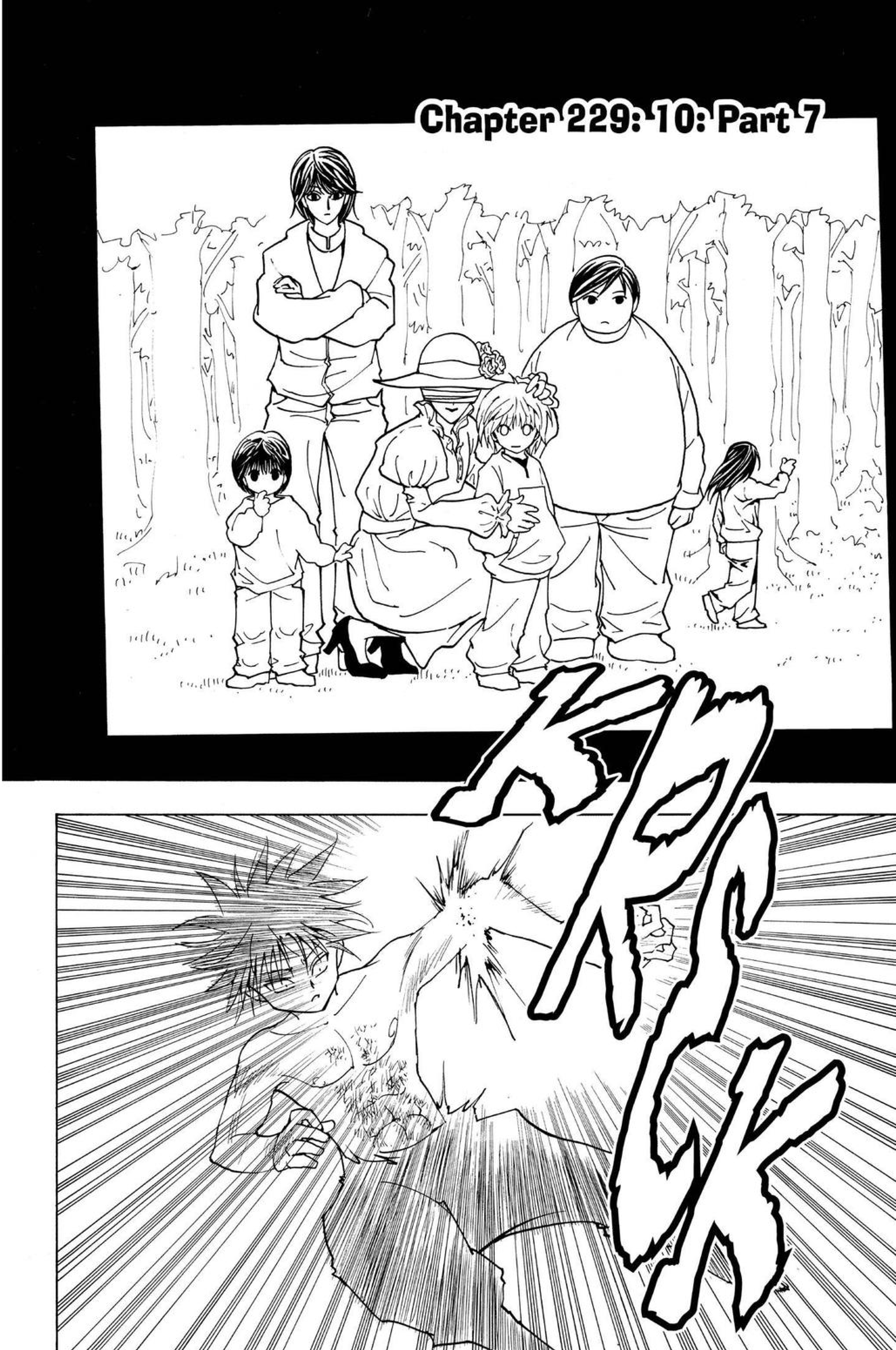

!!
KRAK
HMPH!
WOM
BUT SHE DIDN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM...
SHE THREW SOME WEAK AURA.
THAT KO ATTACK WORKED AGAINST HIM.

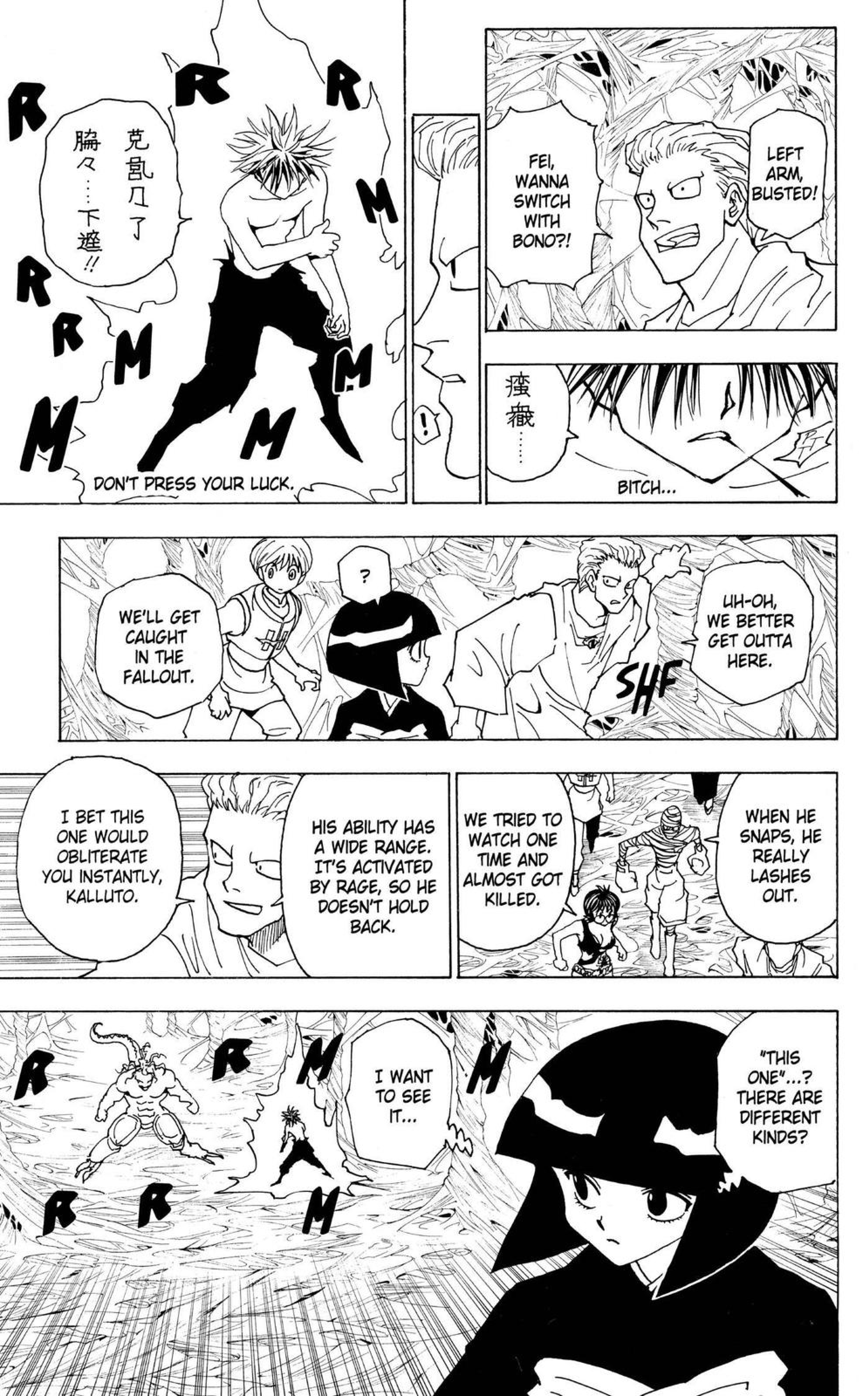

HE FOCUSED ALL HIS AURA INTO ONE POINT, YET IT DID ***NOTHING!*** THIS CAME AS A SURPRISE, DELAYING HIS DEFENSE BY A SPLIT SECOND.
HE WAS LEFT TOTALLY EXPOSED!! EVEN A CRUDE EMISSION DEALT SEVERE DAMAGE.
SHE KNOWS HOW TO USE AURA.
SHE'S NOT QUEEN FOR NOTHING.
KOFF
HEH HEH.
MY BODY IS INDESTRUCTIBLE!!
SHOULDN'T WE HELP?
HUH? WHY?
I TOLD YOU IT'S A ***RACE.***
THE NEXT GUY CAN GIVE IT A TRY IF FEITAN FAILS.
SO WHO'S NEXT?
ISN'T IT BY ORDER OF ARRIVAL?
THEN IT'S ME.
HEY, YOU GOT HERE THE SAME TIME I DID.
DUH! I ***WAITED*** FOR YOU TO FINISH YOUR BATTLE!
OKAY, OKAY. FLIP A COIN.
...
WHAT'S ***WRONG*** WITH THESE PEOPLE?!
THEY'RE TOTAL FREAKS!!

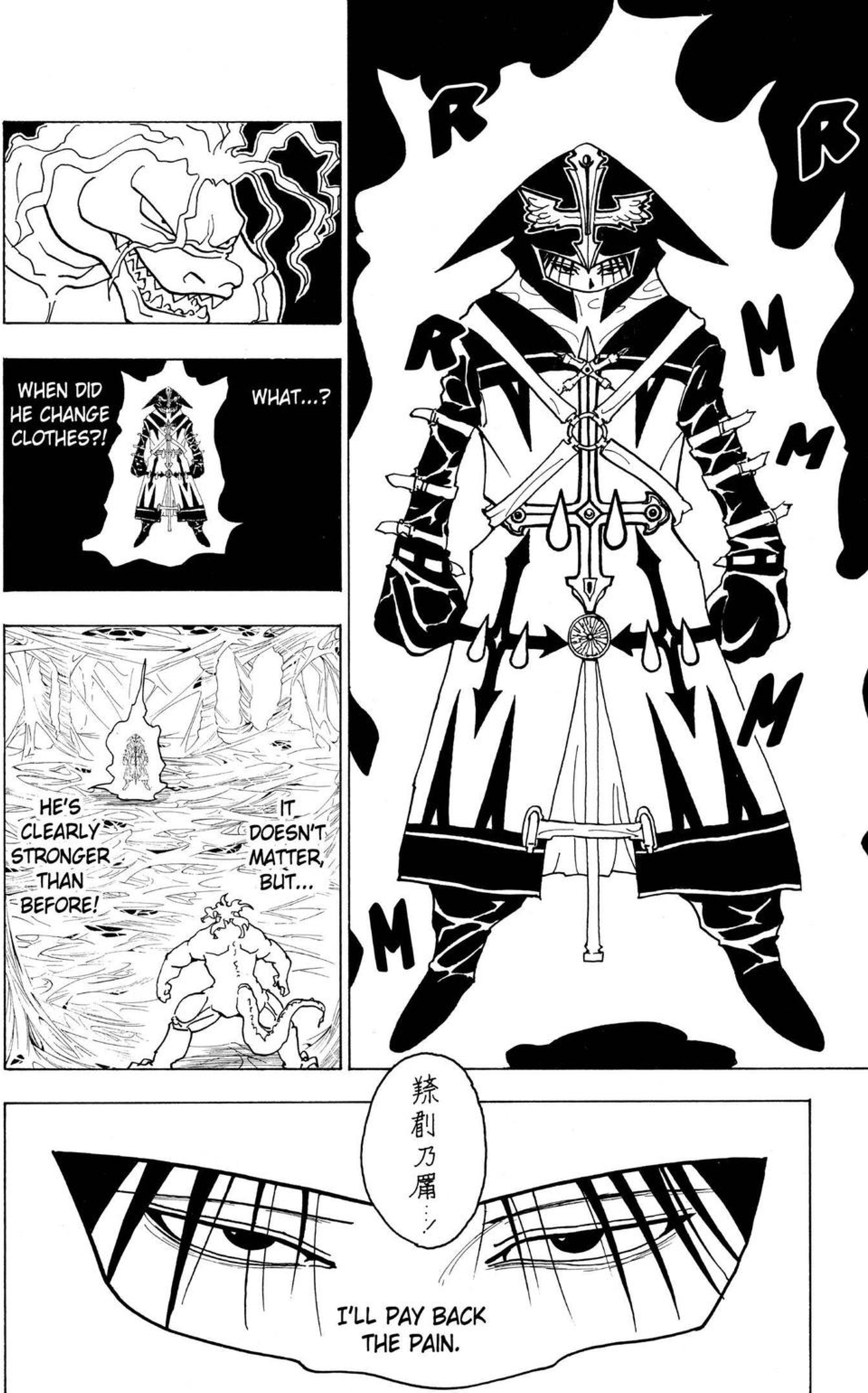
Chapter 229: 10: Part 7

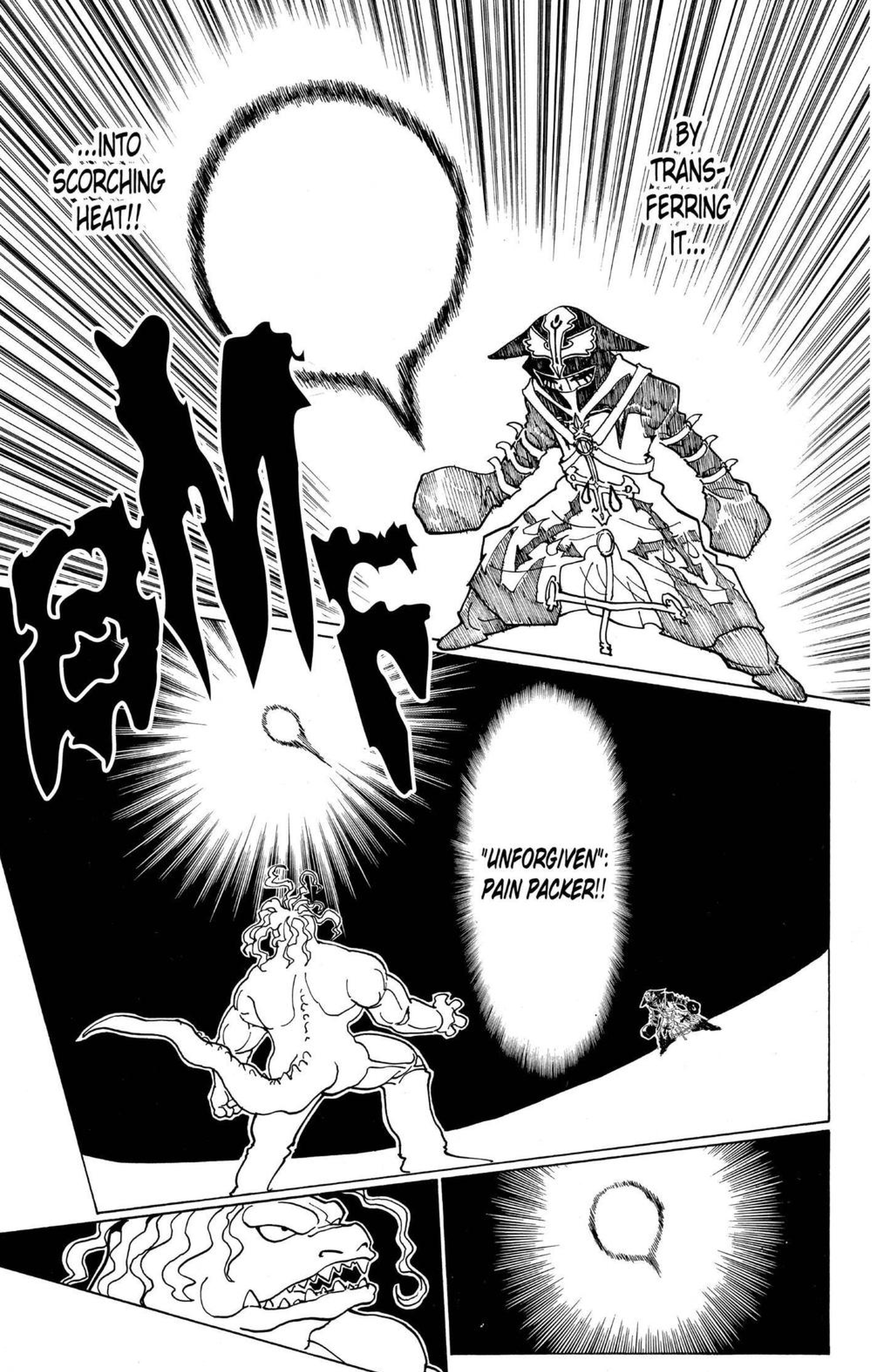

HEADS.
I THOUGHT I'D RISE QUICKLY IN THEIR RANKS.
I UNDER-ESTIMATED THEM...
MEH!
I'M NEXT IF FEITAN GETS KILLED.
ALMOST HOPELESS.
I'M FAR INFERIOR...
I WANT TO GET MY BROTHER BACK.
NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS IT TAKES...
I'M USED TO WAITING IT OUT.
BUT I WON'T GIVE UP.

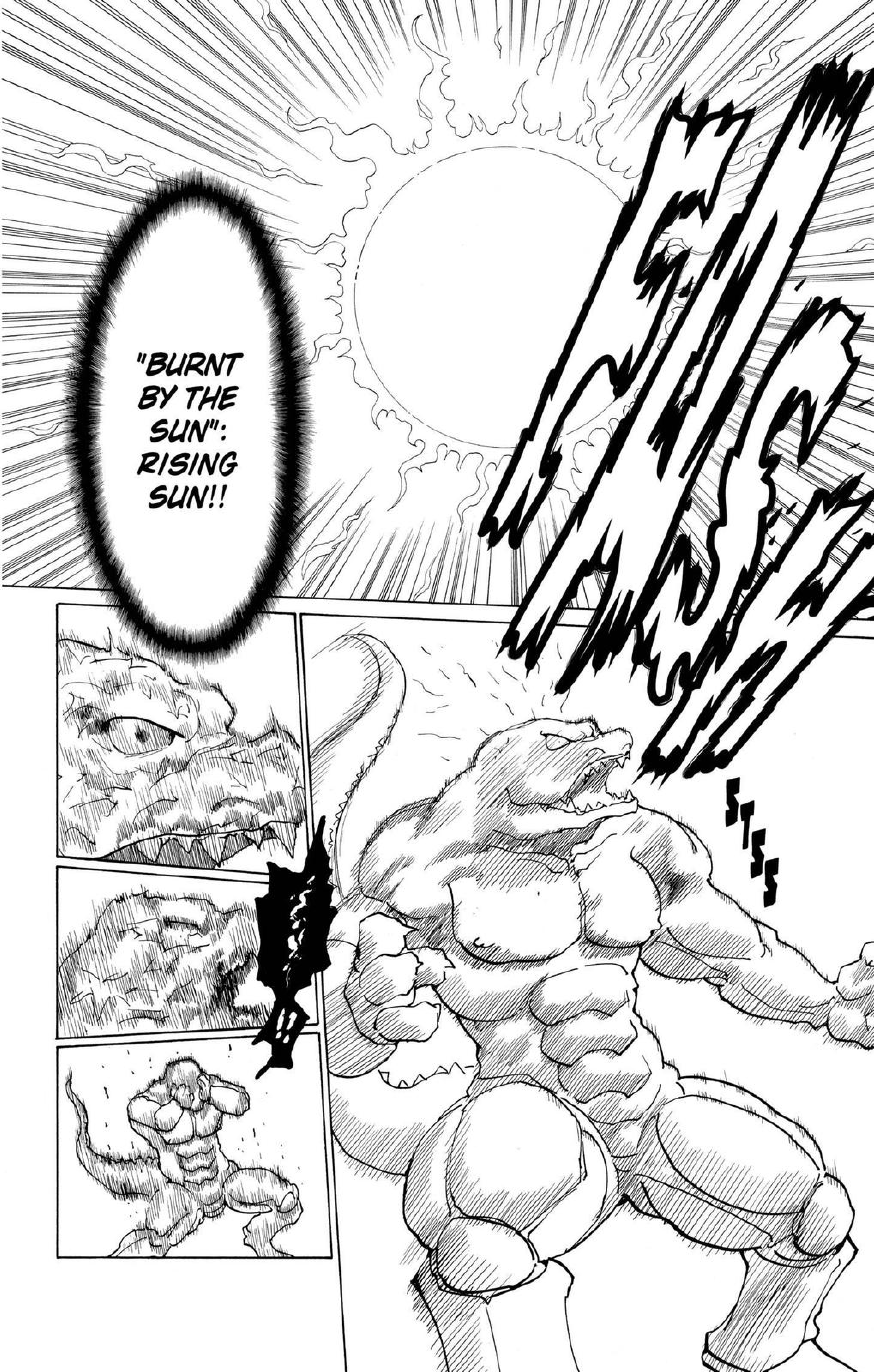
Chapter 229: 10: Part 7

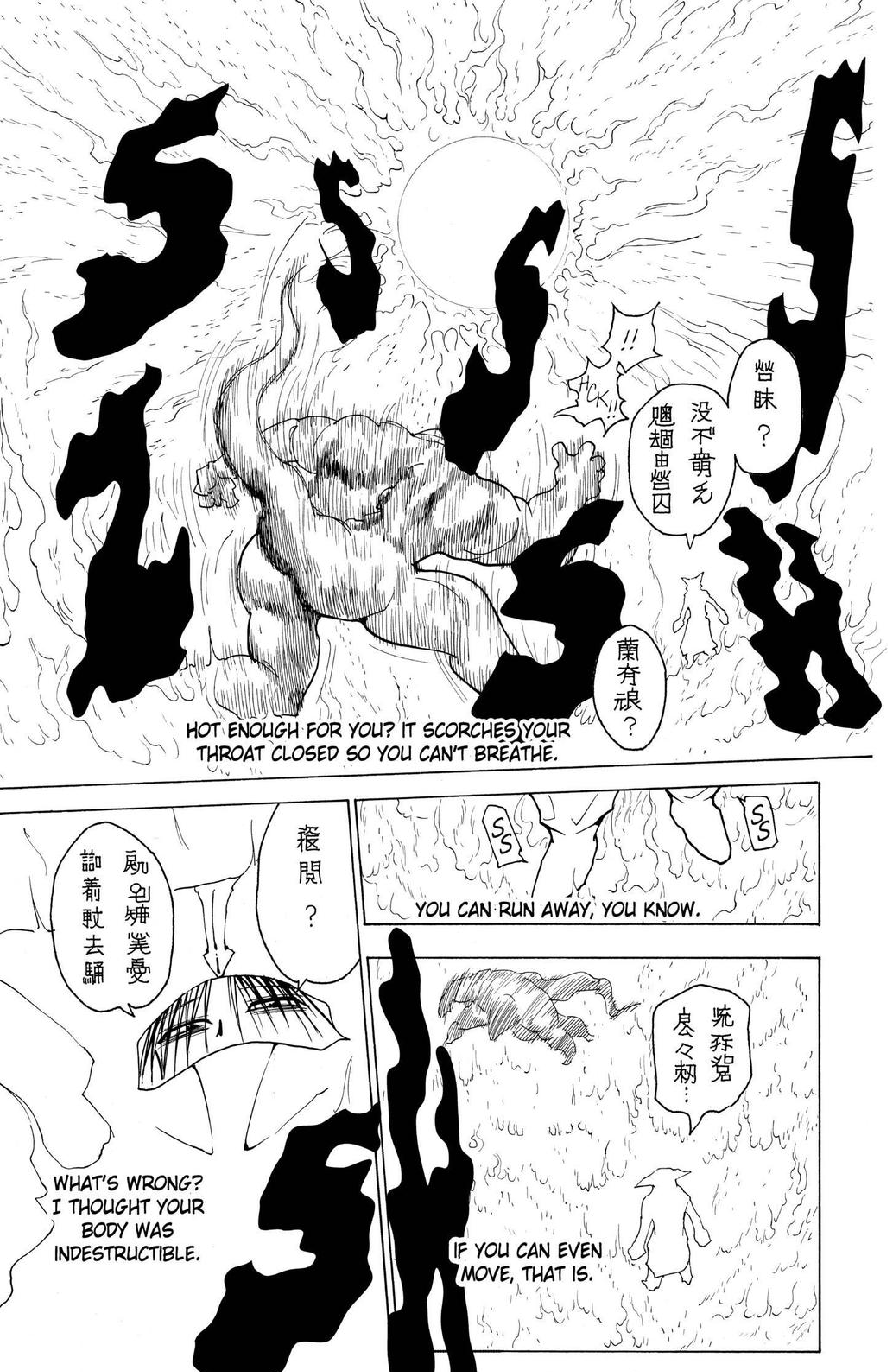


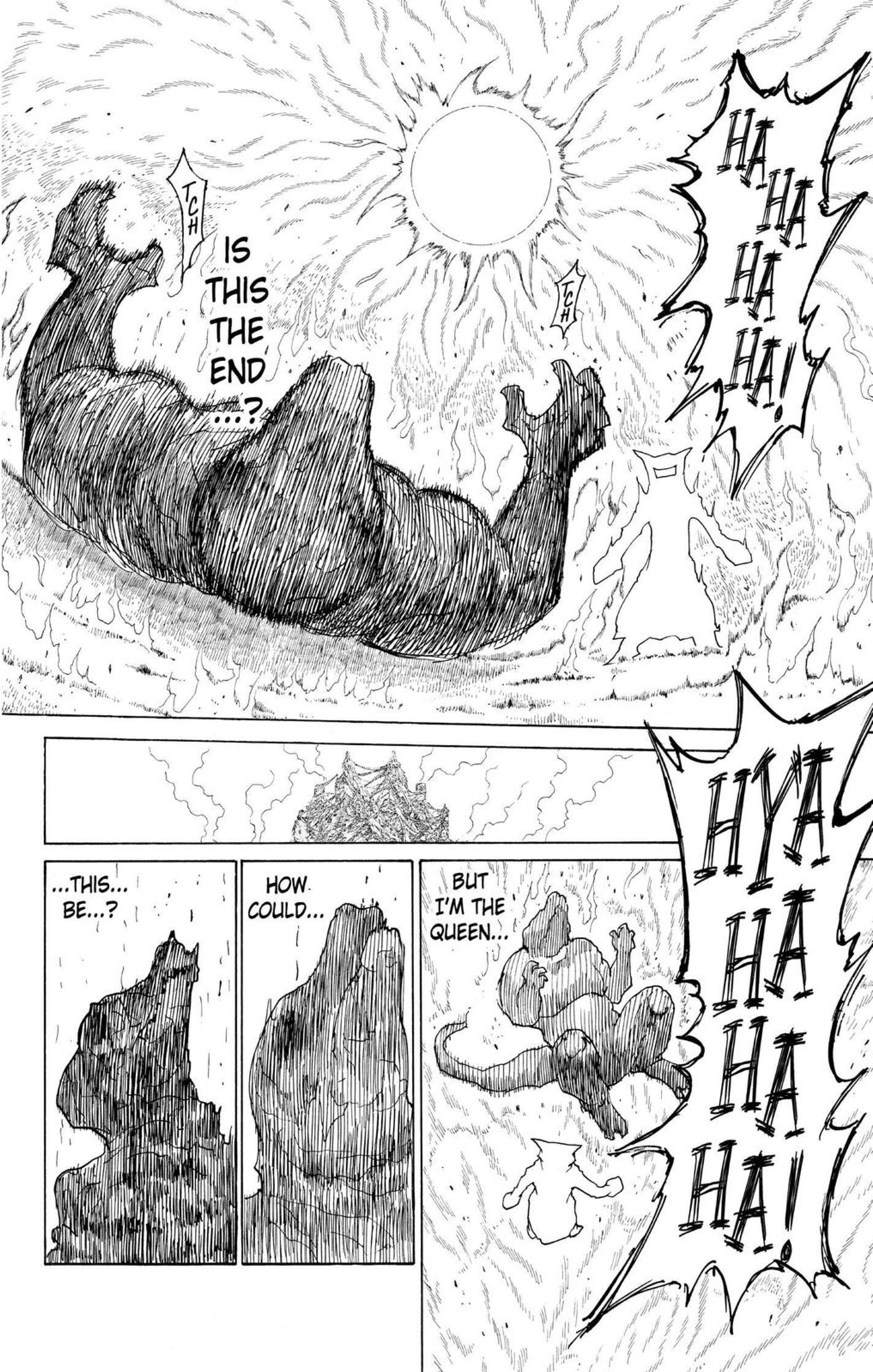

LEFT ARM, BUSTED!
FEI, WANNA SWITCH WITH BONO?!
瘙癪……
BITCH…
!
克乱几了腨々……下遳!!
DON'T PRESS YOUR LUCK.
RRRRRMMMMMM
UH-OH, WE BETTER GET OUTTA HERE.
SHF
?
WE'LL GET CAUGHT IN THE FALLOUT.
WHEN HE SNAPS, HE REALLY LASHES OUT.
WE TRIED TO WATCH ONE TIME AND ALMOST GOT KILLED.
HIS ABILITY HAS A WIDE RANGE. IT'S ACTIVATED BY RAGE, SO HE DOESN'T HOLD BACK.
I BET THIS ONE WOULD OBLITERATE YOU INSTANTLY, KALLUTO.
"THIS ONE"…? THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS?
I WANT TO SEE IT…
RRRRRMMMMM

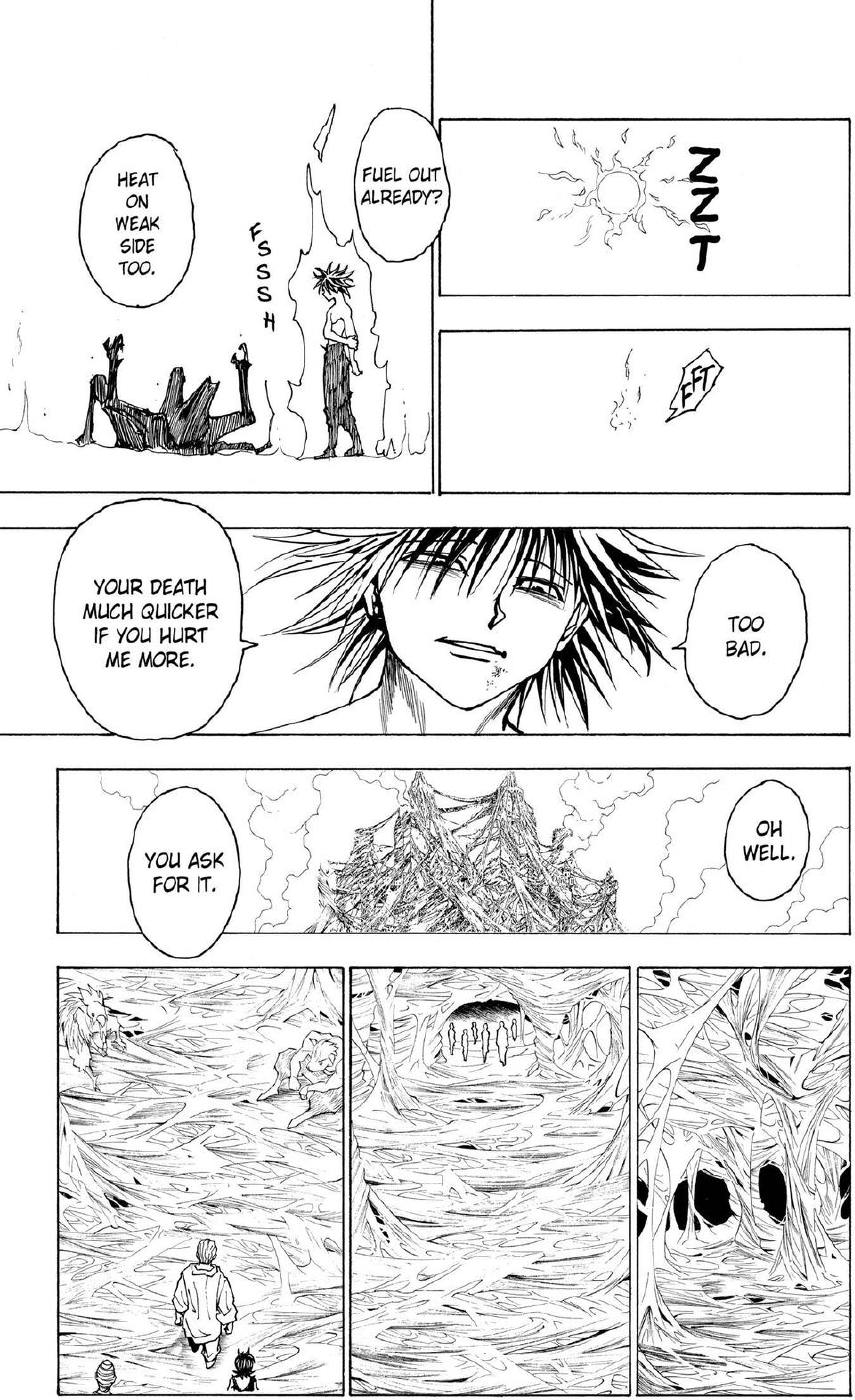

R
R
R
M
M
M
M
M
WHAT...?
WHEN DID HE CHANGE CLOTHES?!
IT DOESN'T MATTER, BUT...
HE'S CLEARLY STRONGER THAN BEFORE!
羕剴乃屚…!
I'LL PAY BACK THE PAIN.

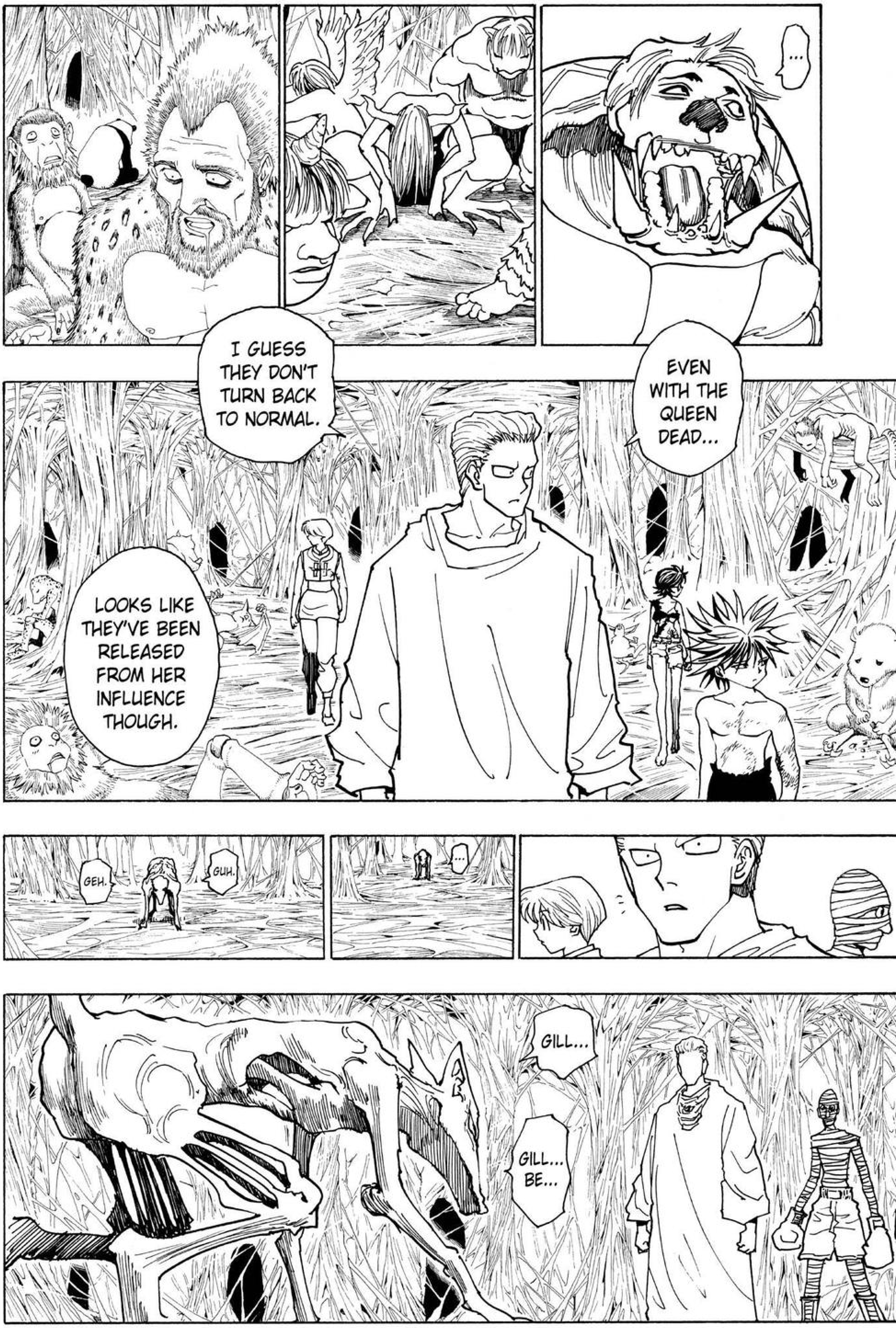

BY TRANS-FERRING IT...
...INTO SCORCHING HEAT!!
"UNFORGIVEN": PAIN PACKER!!

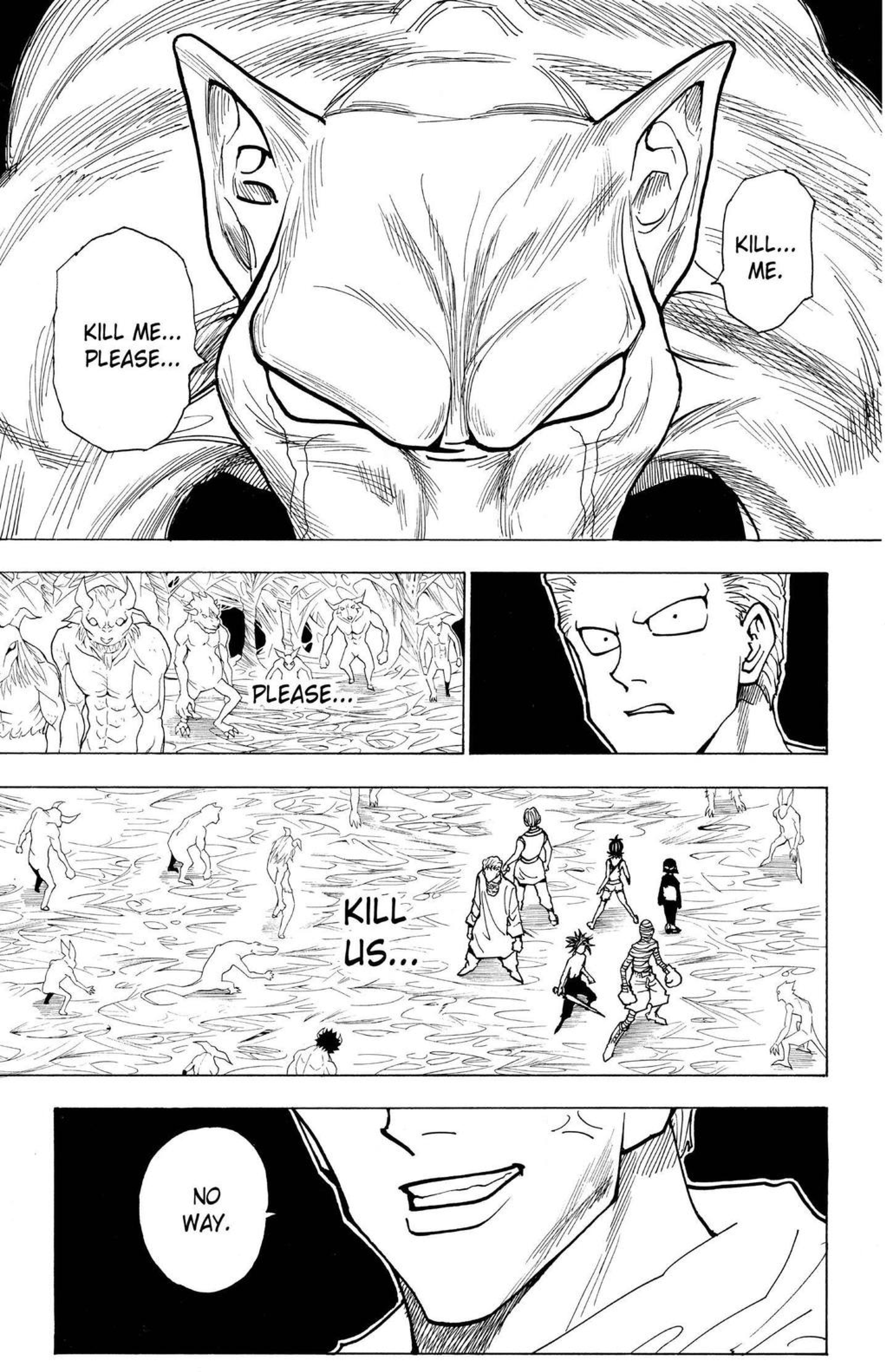

"BURNT BY THE SUN": RISING SUN!!
STSS
!!

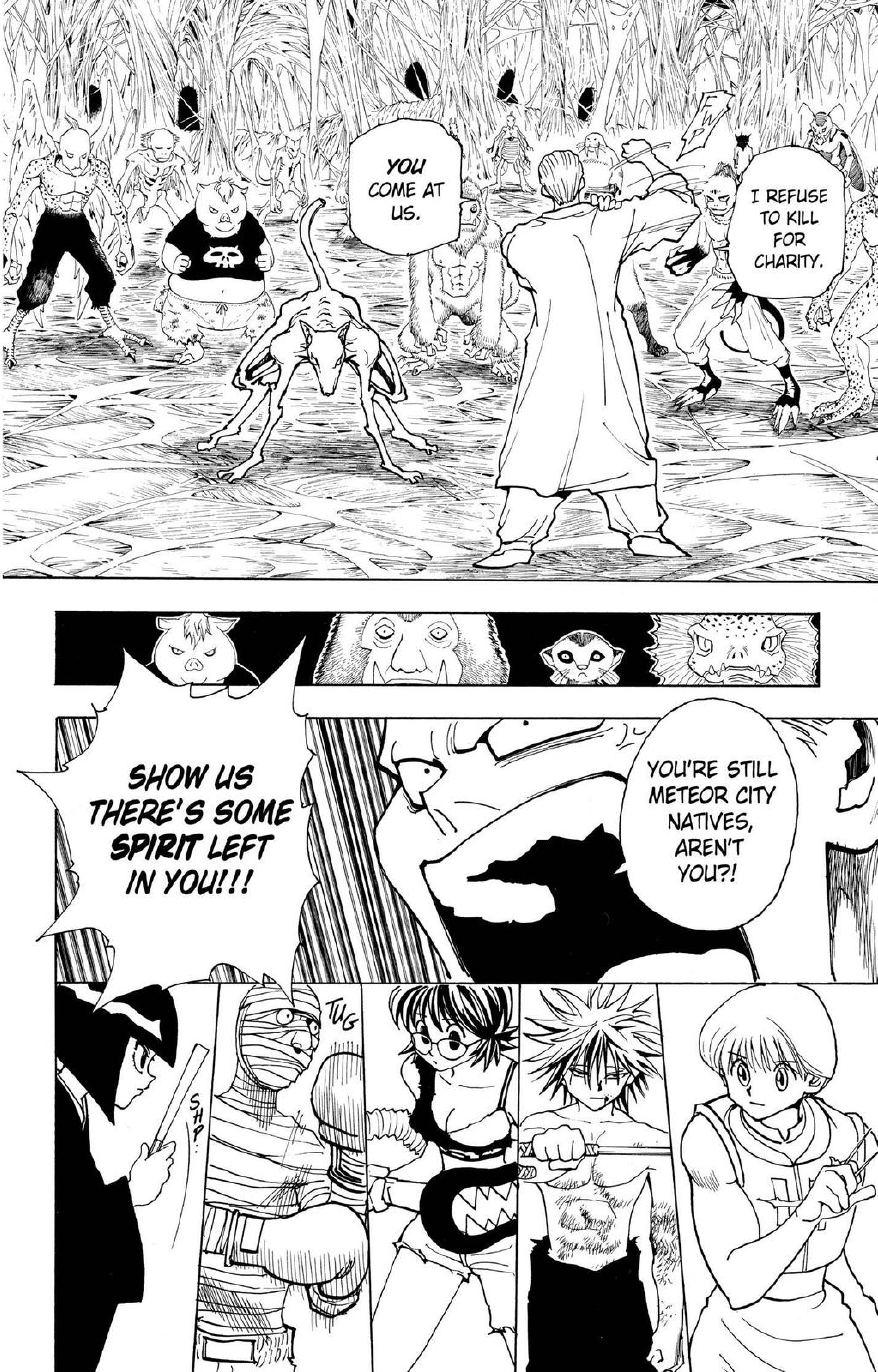

皆昧？ 没不萌そ 廼趟由皆囚
!!
HCK!!
蘭斉祳？
HOT ENOUGH FOR YOU? IT SCORCHES YOUR THROAT CLOSED SO YOU CAN'T BREATHE.
SS
SS
YOU CAN RUN AWAY, YOU KNOW.
殺閔？
勵㔾婶美憂 謟着軙去驕
WHAT'S WRONG? I THOUGHT YOUR BODY WAS INDESTRUCTIBLE.
蔬孖䆖 㒵々絅…
IF YOU CAN EVEN MOVE, THAT IS.


HA HA HA HA HA!
TCH
IS THIS THE END...?
TCH
HYA HA HA HA HA!
BUT I'M THE QUEEN...
HOW COULD...
...THIS... BE...?

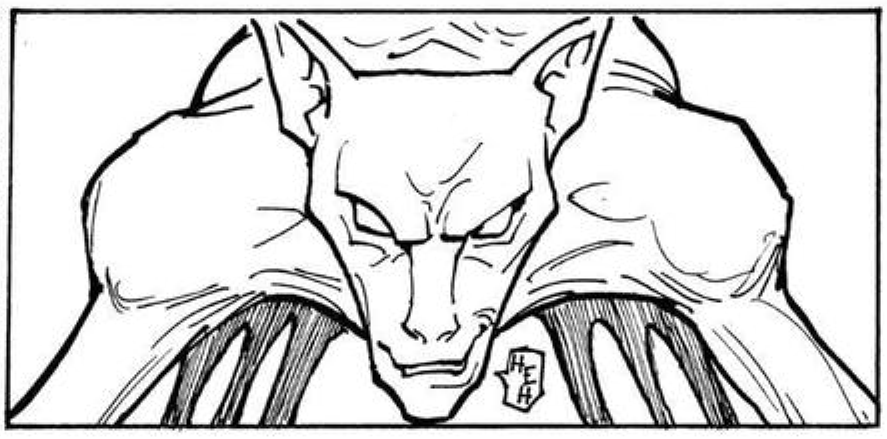

ZZT
FFT
FUEL OUT ALREADY?
FSSSH
HEAT ON WEAK SIDE TOO.
TOO BAD.
YOUR DEATH MUCH QUICKER IF YOU HURT ME MORE.
OH WELL.
YOU ASK FOR IT.

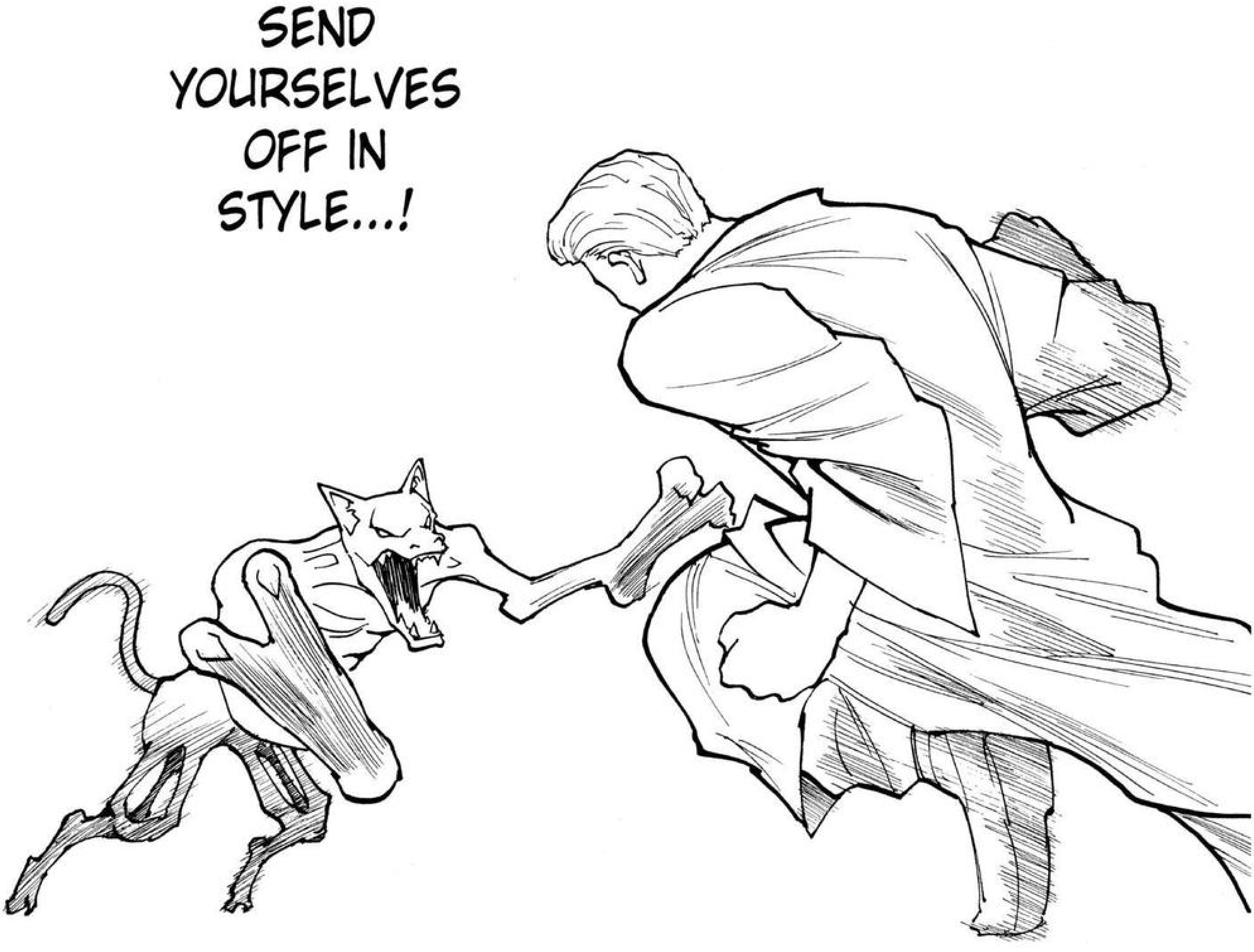

…
EVEN WITH THE QUEEN DEAD...
I GUESS THEY DON'T TURN BACK TO NORMAL.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE BEEN RELEASED FROM HER INFLUENCE THOUGH.
…
GUH.
GEH.
GILL...
GILL... BE...

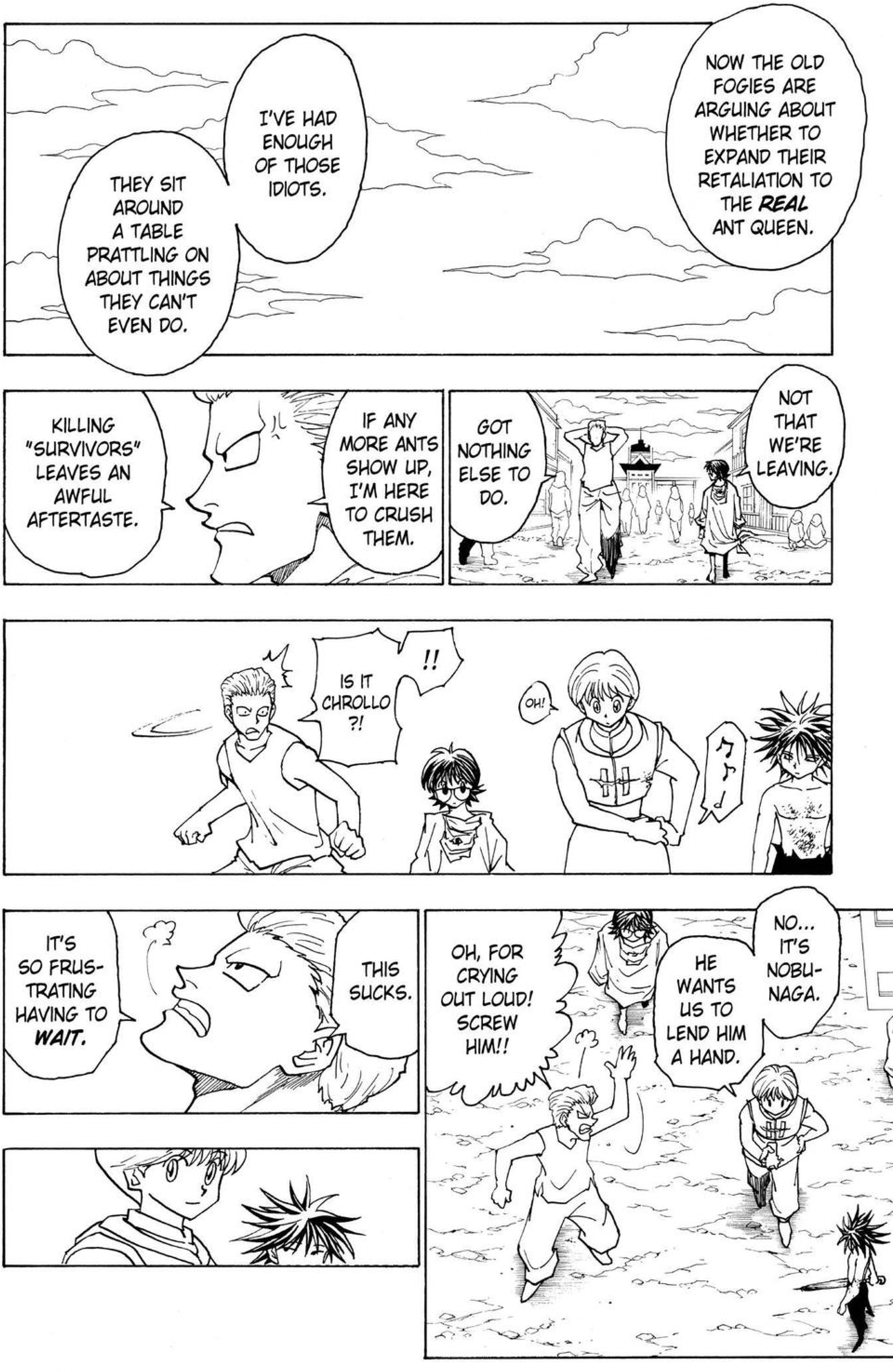

KILL... ME.
KILL ME... PLEASE...
PLEASE...
KILL US...
NO WAY.

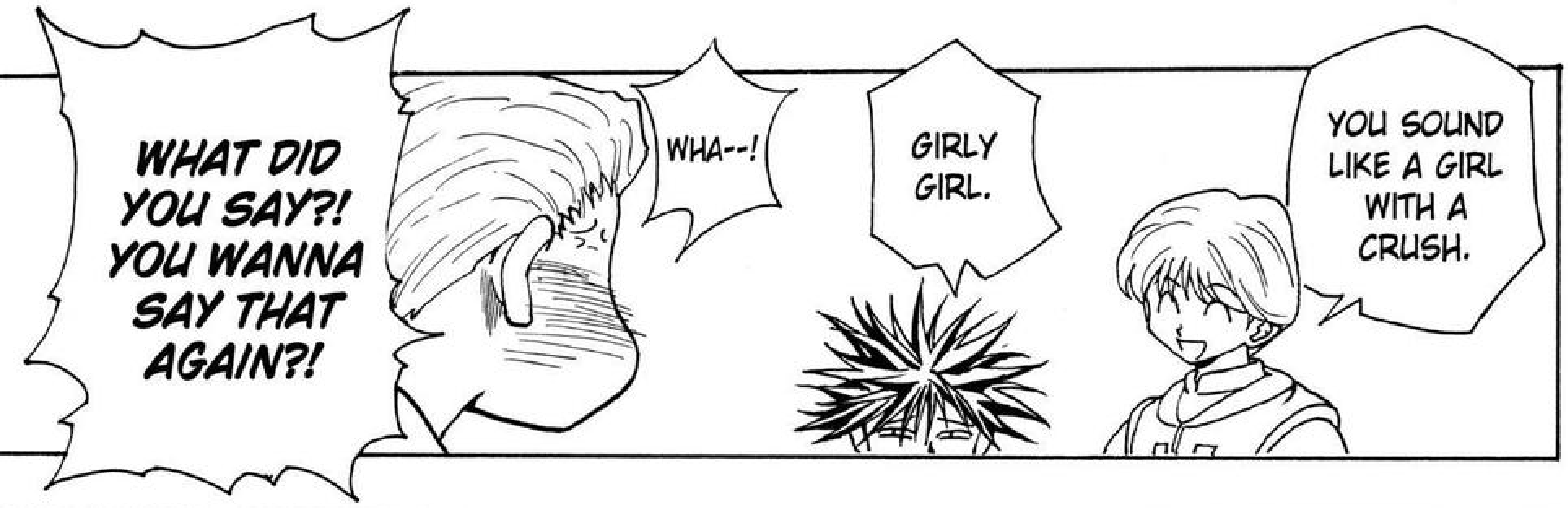

FWP
I REFUSE TO KILL FOR CHARITY.
YOU COME AT US.
YOU'RE STILL METEOR CITY NATIVES, AREN'T YOU?!
SHOW US THERE'S SOME SPIRIT LEFT IN YOU!!!
TUG
SHP..

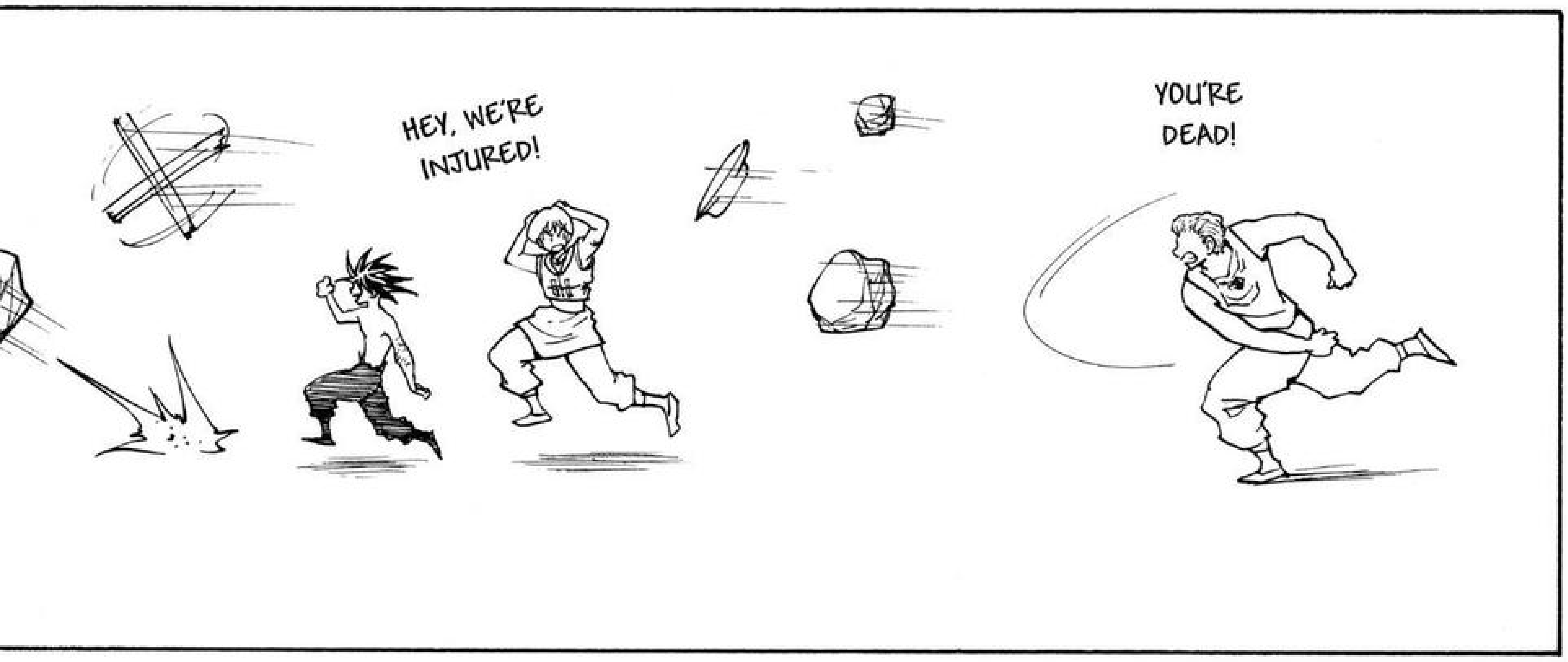
READ THIS WAY

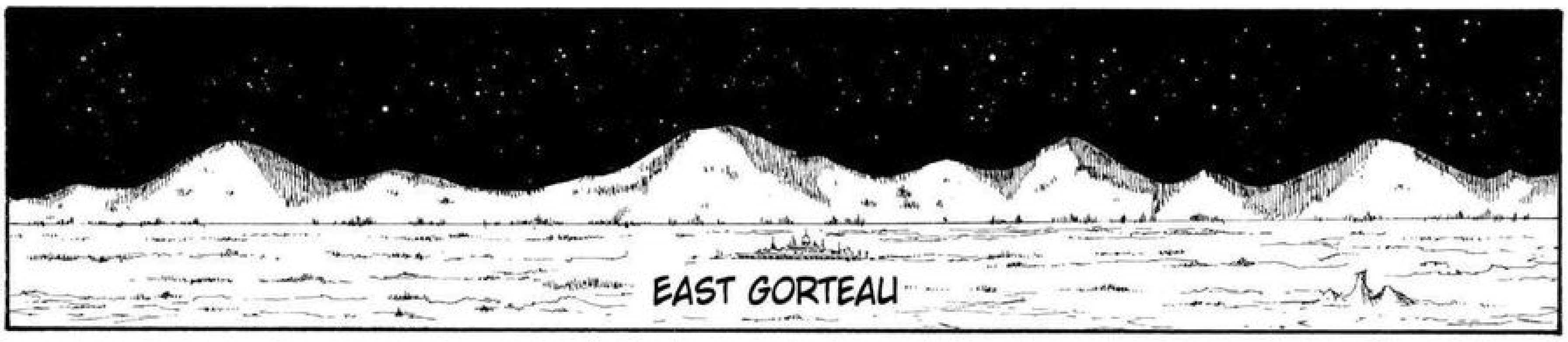


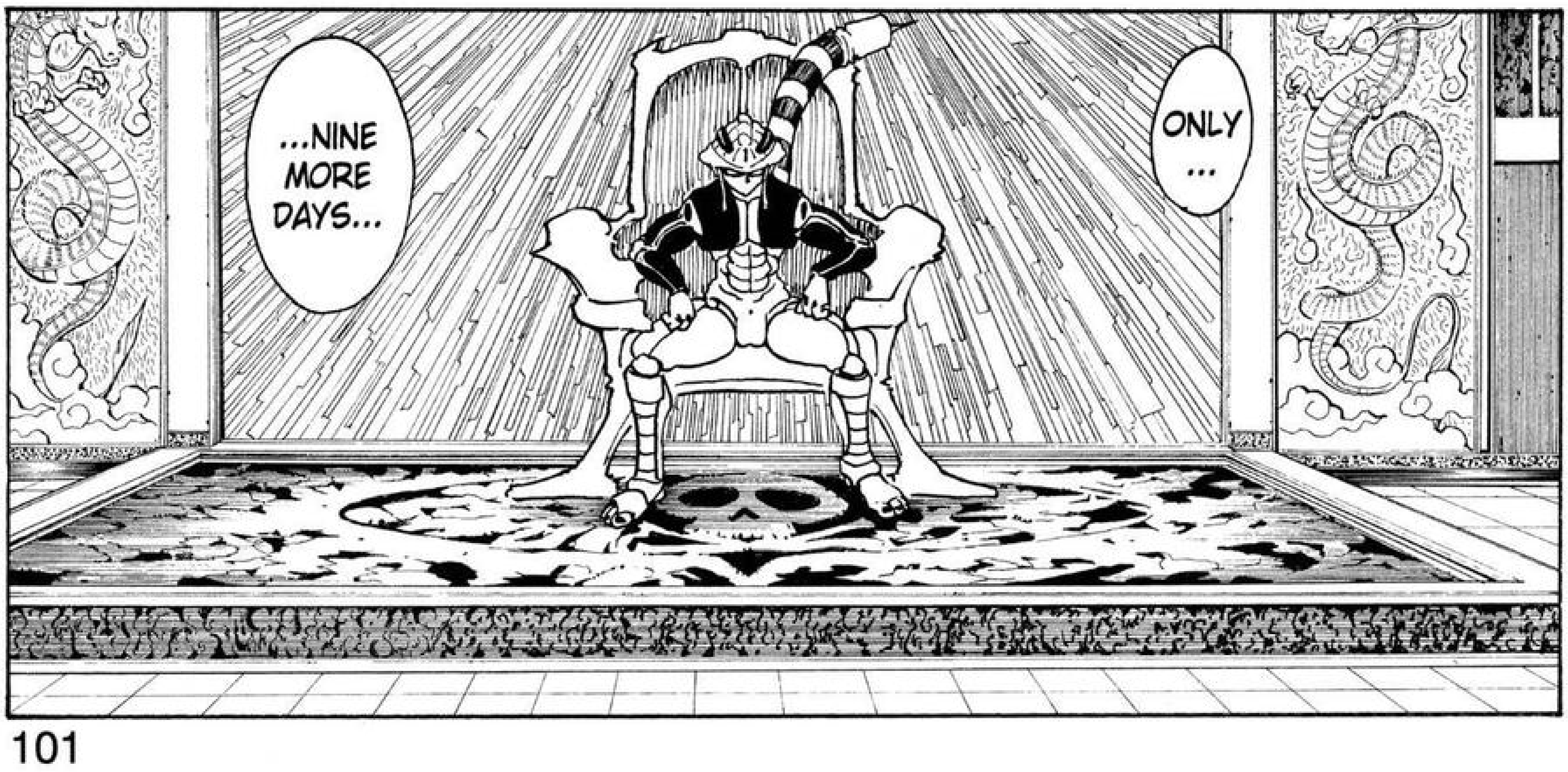

SEND YOURSELVES OFF IN STYLE...!

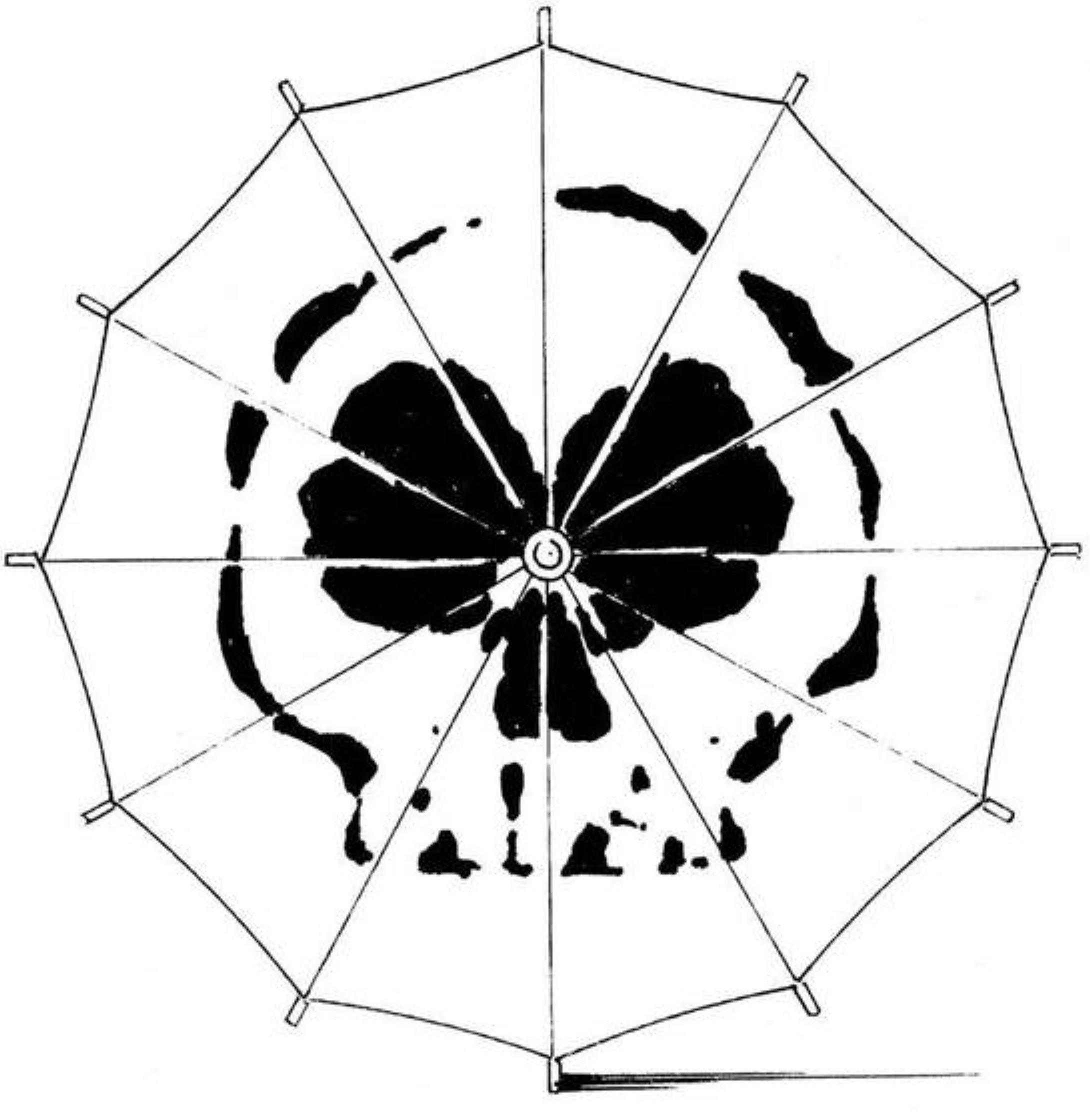

NOW THE OLD FOGIES ARE ARGUING ABOUT WHETHER TO EXPAND THEIR RETALIATION TO THE *REAL* ANT QUEEN.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THOSE IDIOTS.
THEY SIT AROUND A TABLE PRATTLING ON ABOUT THINGS THEY CAN'T EVEN DO.
NOT THAT WE'RE LEAVING.
GOT NOTHING ELSE TO DO.
IF ANY MORE ANTS SHOW UP, I'M HERE TO CRUSH THEM.
KILLING "SURVIVORS" LEAVES AN AWFUL AFTERTASTE.
OH!
!!
IS IT CHROLLO?!
NO... IT'S NOBUNAGA.
HE WANTS US TO LEND HIM A HAND.
OH, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! SCREW HIM!!
THIS SUCKS.
IT'S SO FRUSTRATING HAVING TO *WAIT.*


YOU SOUND LIKE A GIRL WITH A CRUSH.
GIRLY GIRL.
WHA--!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?! YOU WANNA SAY THAT AGAIN?!

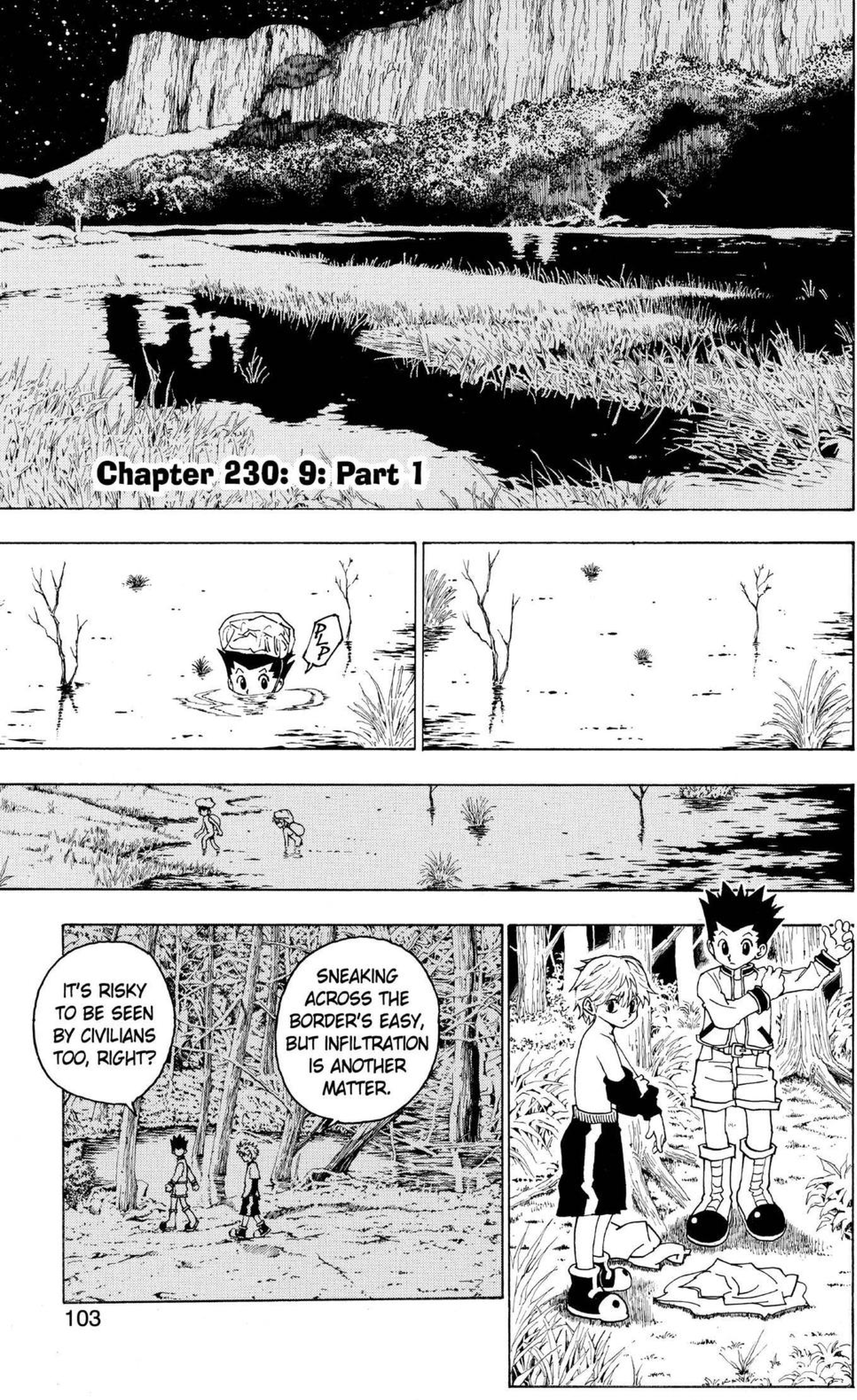

YOU'RE DEAD!
HEY, WE'RE INJURED!

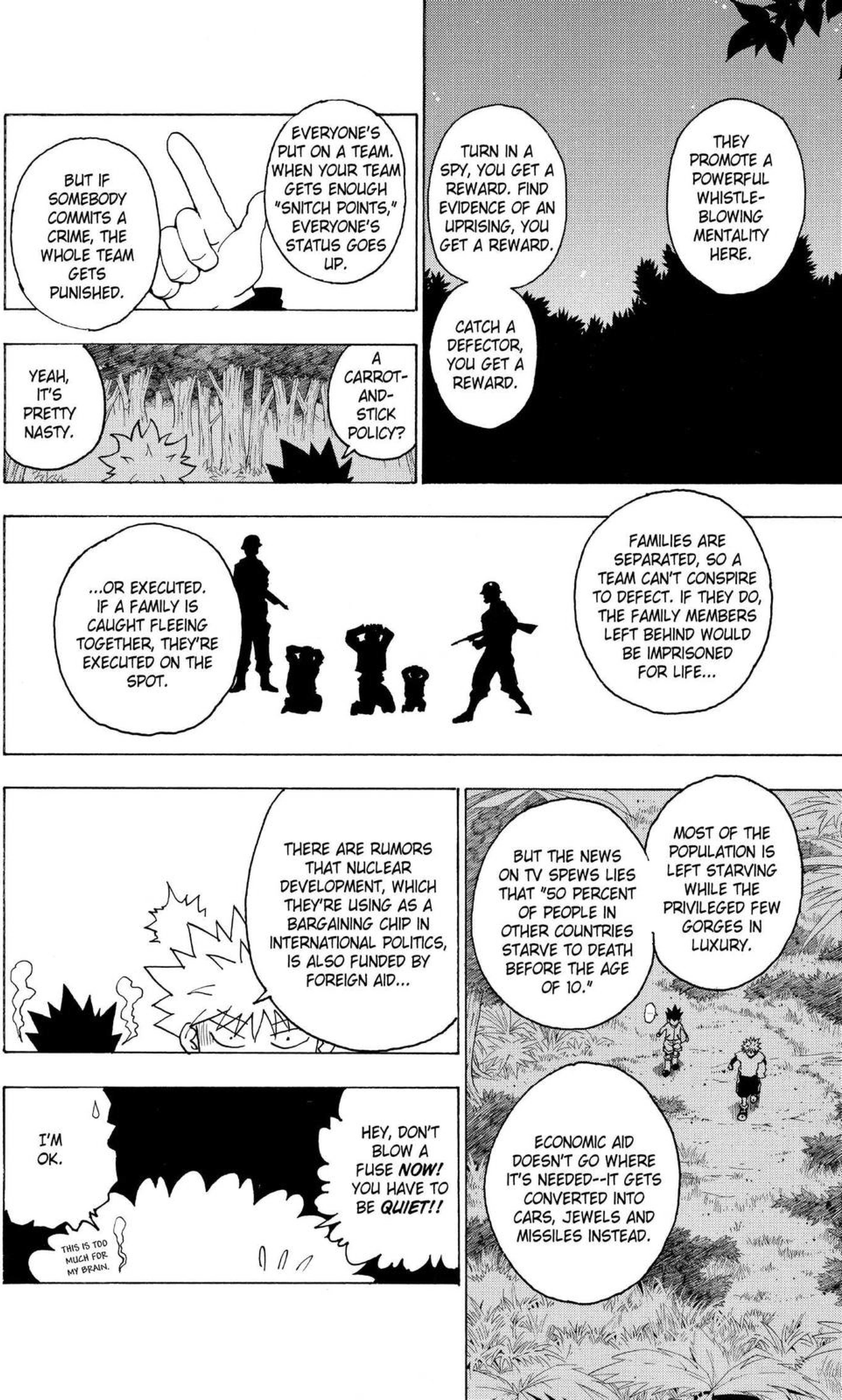

EAST GORTEAU

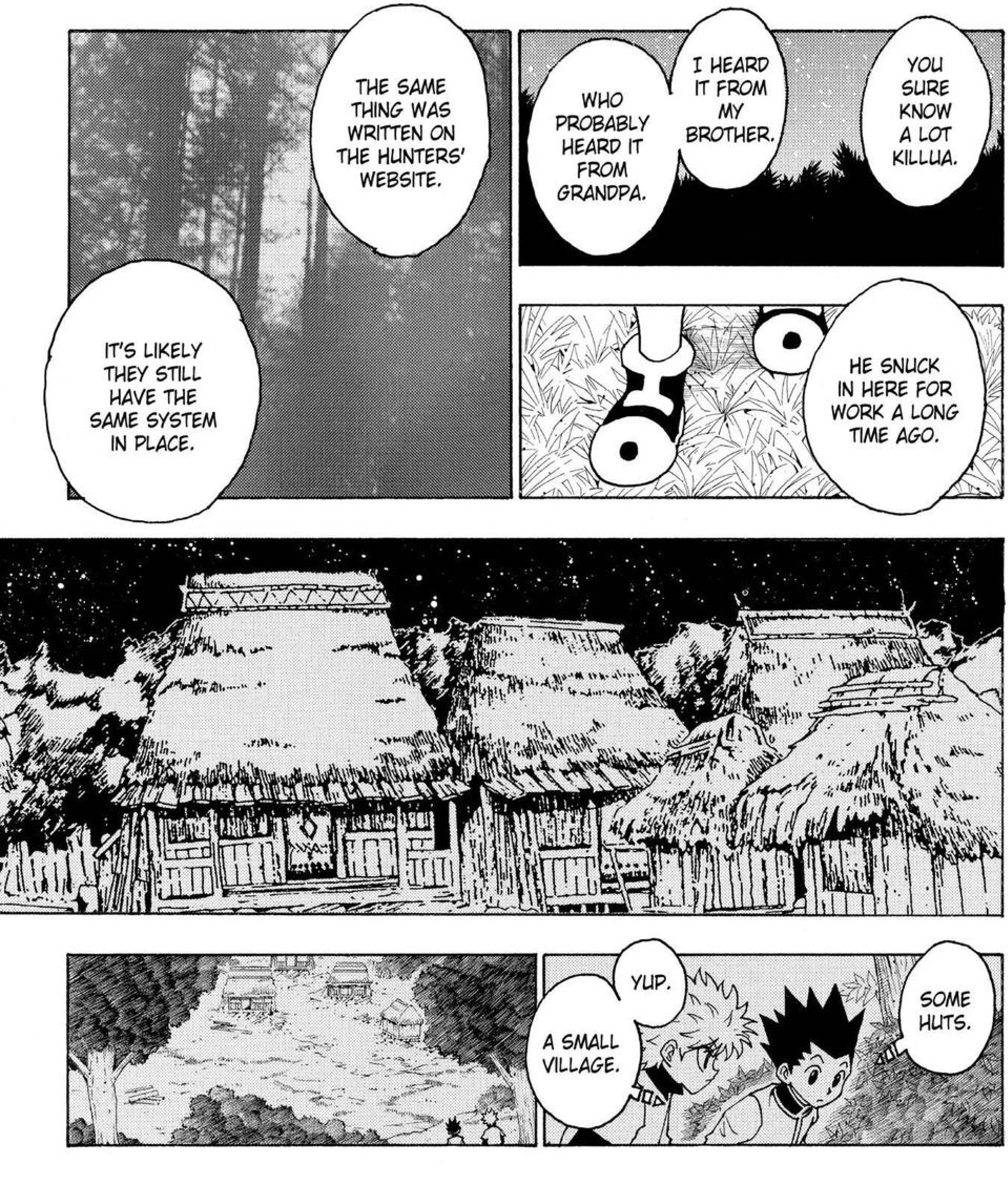

ONLY ...
...NINE MORE DAYS...

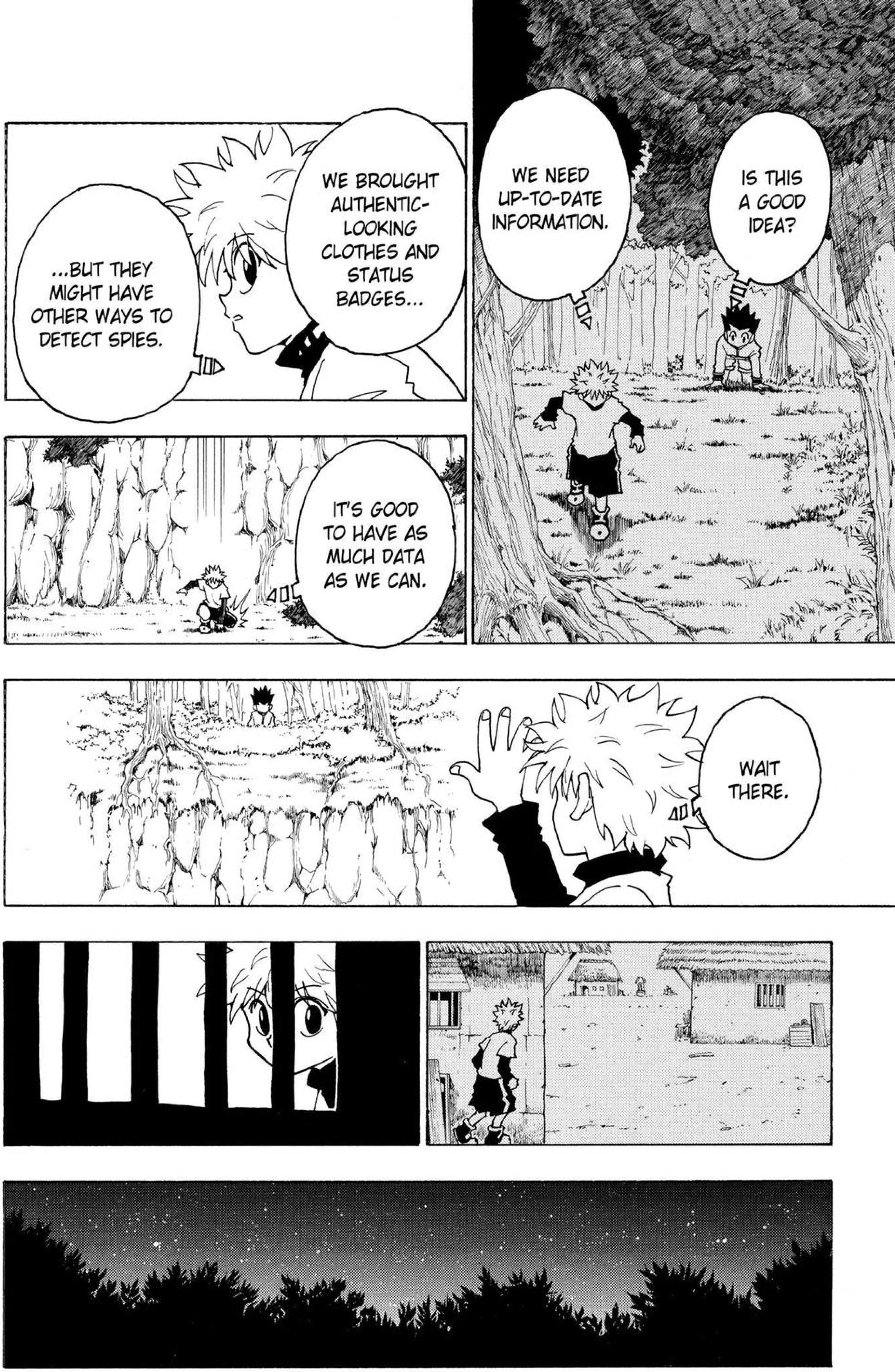


Chapter 230: 9: Part 1

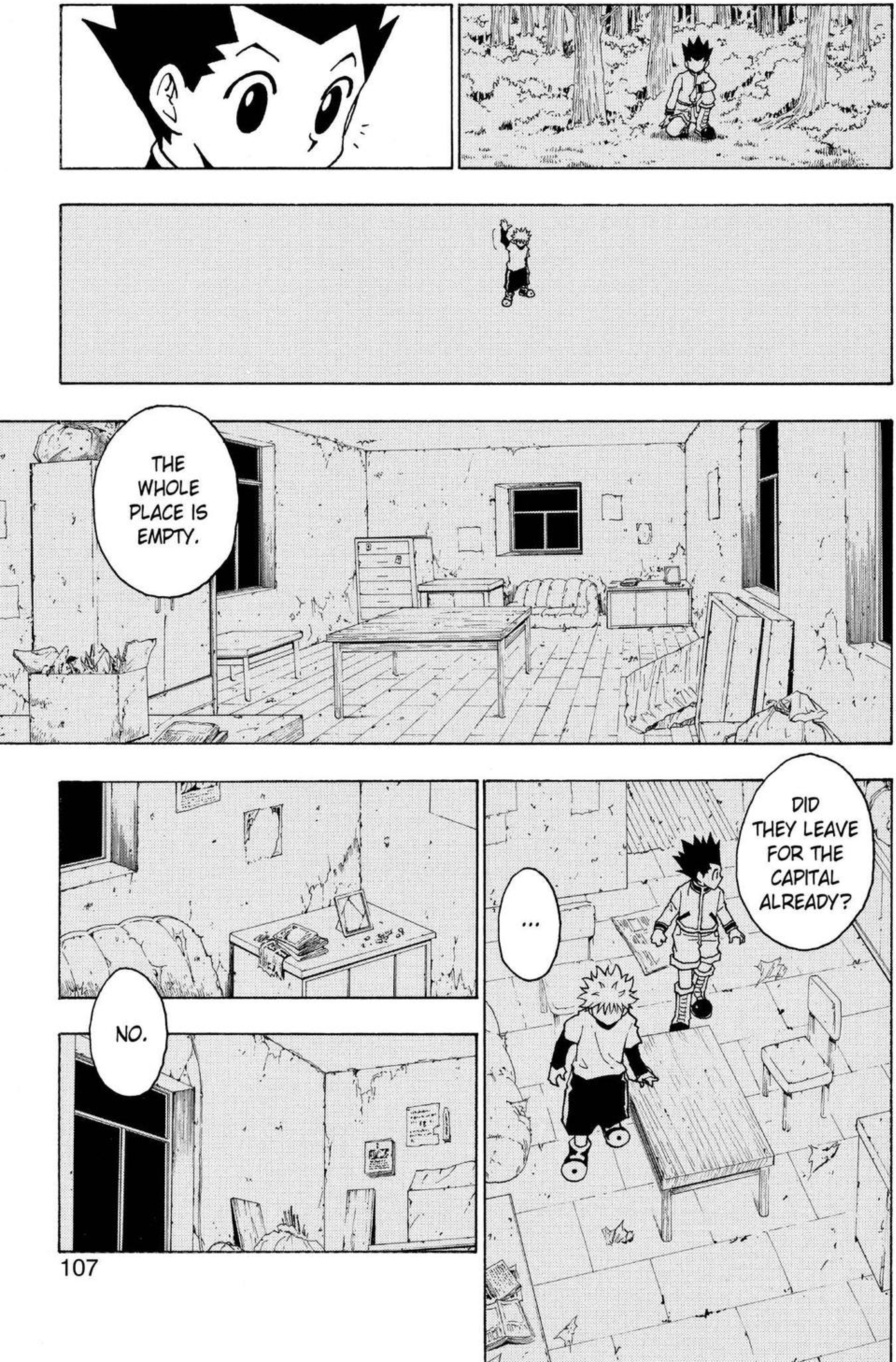

PLP
SNEAKING ACROSS THE BORDER'S EASY, BUT INFILTRATION IS ANOTHER MATTER.
IT'S RISKY TO BE SEEN BY CIVILIANS TOO, RIGHT?

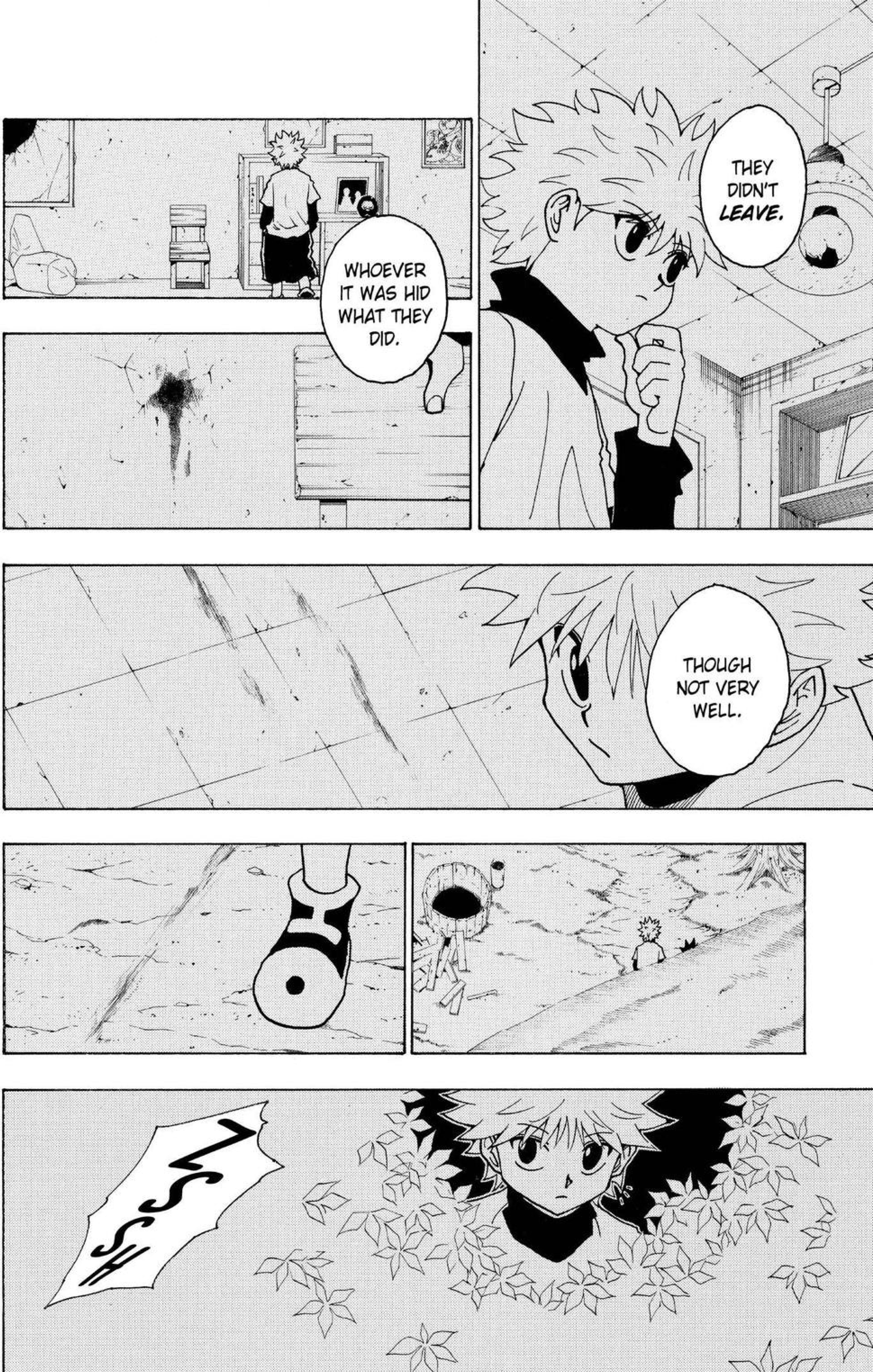

THEY PROMOTE A POWERFUL WHISTLE-BLOWING MENTALITY HERE.
TURN IN A SPY, YOU GET A REWARD. FIND EVIDENCE OF AN UPRISING, YOU GET A REWARD.
CATCH A DEFECTOR, YOU GET A REWARD.
EVERYONE'S PUT ON A TEAM. WHEN YOUR TEAM GETS ENOUGH "SNITCH POINTS," EVERYONE'S STATUS GOES UP.
BUT IF SOMEBODY COMMITS A CRIME, THE WHOLE TEAM GETS PUNISHED.
A CARROT-AND-STICK POLICY?
YEAH, IT'S PRETTY NASTY.
FAMILIES ARE SEPARATED, SO A TEAM CAN'T CONSPIRE TO DEFECT. IF THEY DO, THE FAMILY MEMBERS LEFT BEHIND WOULD BE IMPRISONED FOR LIFE...
...OR EXECUTED. IF A FAMILY IS CAUGHT FLEEING TOGETHER, THEY'RE EXECUTED ON THE SPOT.
MOST OF THE POPULATION IS LEFT STARVING WHILE THE PRIVILEGED FEW GORGES IN LUXURY.
BUT THE NEWS ON TV SPEWS LIES THAT "50 PERCENT OF PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES STARVE TO DEATH BEFORE THE AGE OF 10."
...
ECONOMIC AID DOESN'T GO WHERE IT'S NEEDED--IT GETS CONVERTED INTO CARS, JEWELS AND MISSILES INSTEAD.
THERE ARE RUMORS THAT NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT, WHICH THEY'RE USING AS A BARGAINING CHIP IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, IS ALSO FUNDED BY FOREIGN AID...
HEY, DON'T BLOW A FUSE NOW! YOU HAVE TO BE QUIET!!
I'M OK.
THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR MY BRAIN.

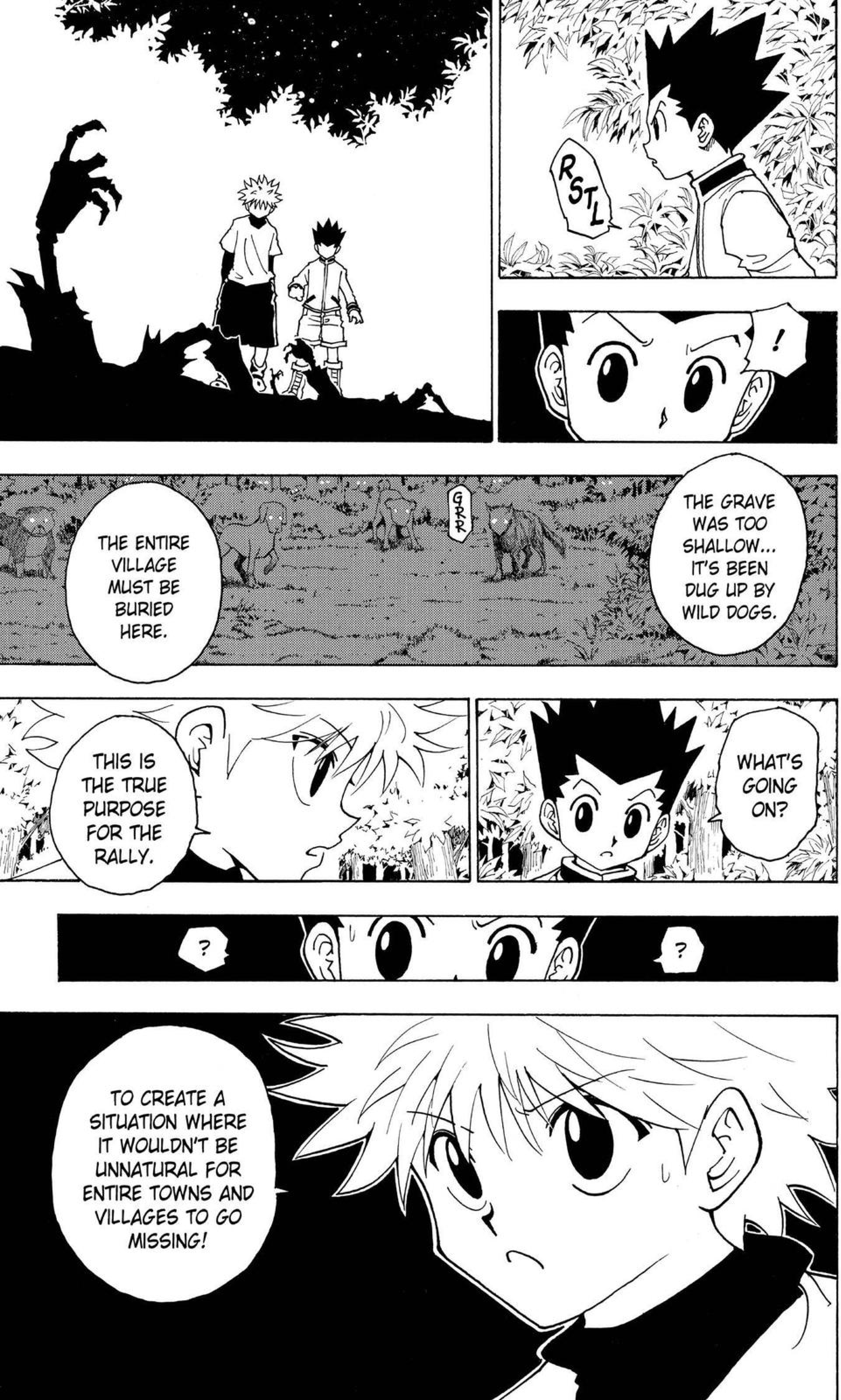

YOU SURE KNOW A LOT KILLUA.
I HEARD IT FROM MY BROTHER.
WHO PROBABLY HEARD IT FROM GRANDPA.
HE SNUCK IN HERE FOR WORK A LONG TIME AGO.
THE SAME THING WAS WRITTEN ON THE HUNTERS' WEBSITE.
IT'S LIKELY THEY STILL HAVE THE SAME SYSTEM IN PLACE.
SOME HUTS.
YUP.
A SMALL VILLAGE.
WHAT DO WE DO?
WE SNEAK IN.

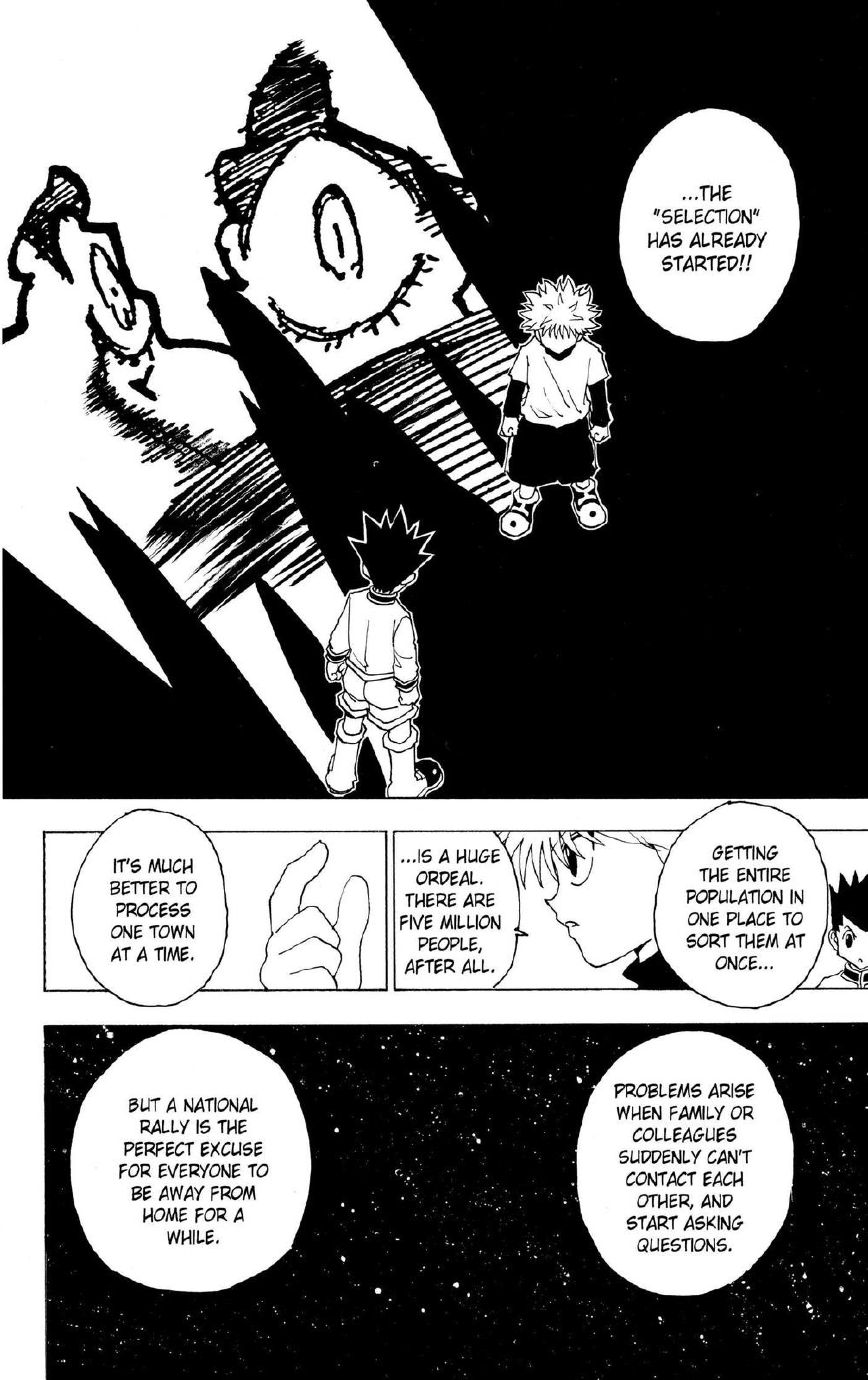

IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?
WE NEED UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.
WE BROUGHT AUTHENTIC-LOOKING CLOTHES AND STATUS BADGES...
...BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE OTHER WAYS TO DETECT SPIES.
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE AS MUCH DATA AS WE CAN.
WAIT THERE.

READ THIS WAY

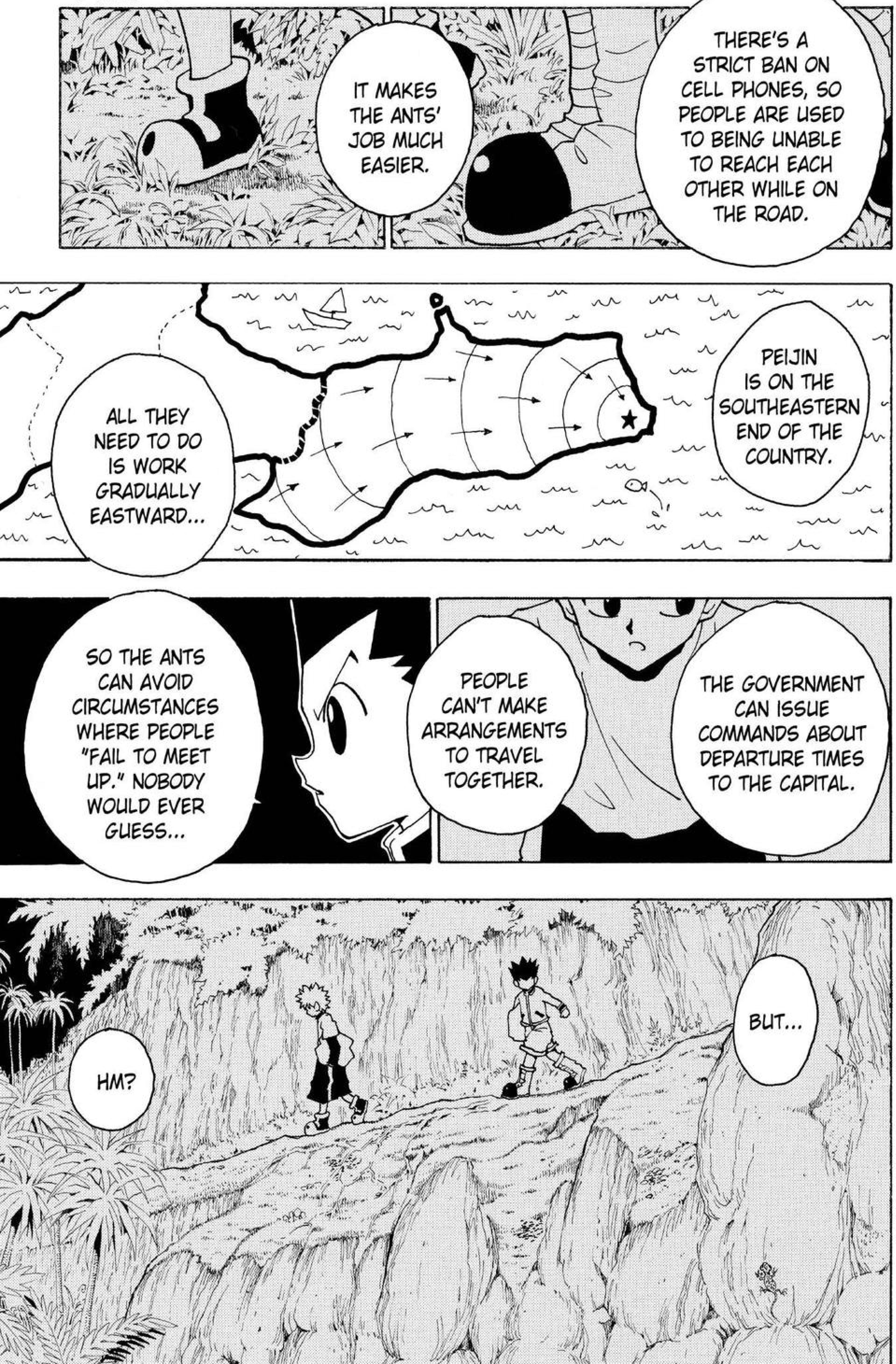

THE WHOLE PLACE IS EMPTY.
DID THEY LEAVE FOR THE CAPITAL ALREADY?
...
NO.

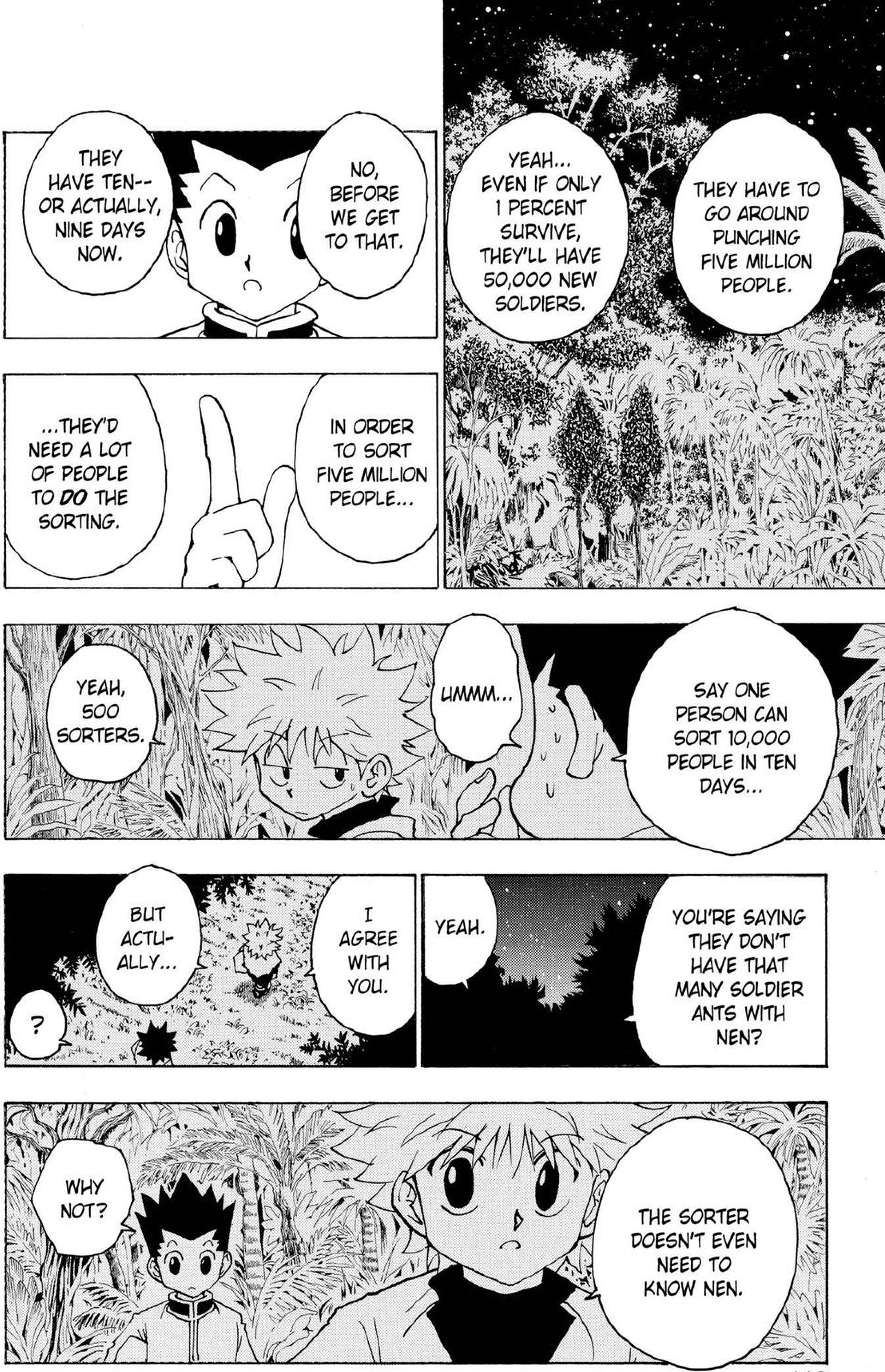

THEY DIDN'T *LEAVE.*
WHOEVER IT WAS HID WHAT THEY DID.
THOUGH NOT VERY WELL.
FSSH

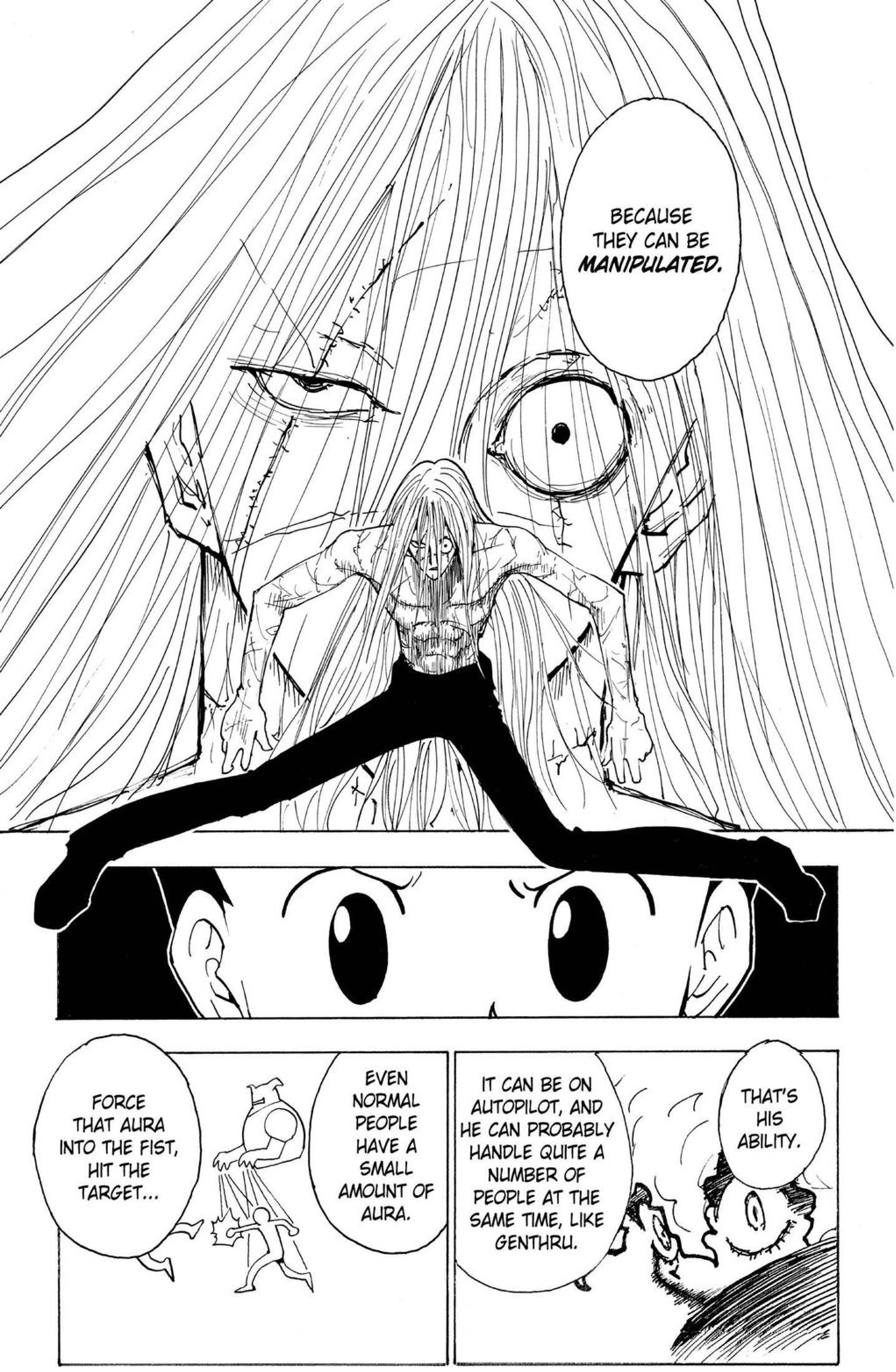

RSTL
!
THE GRAVE WAS TOO SHALLOW... IT'S BEEN DUG UP BY WILD DOGS.
GRR
THE ENTIRE VILLAGE MUST BE BURIED HERE.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THIS IS THE TRUE PURPOSE FOR THE RALLY.
?
?
TO CREATE A SITUATION WHERE IT WOULDN'T BE UNNATURAL FOR ENTIRE TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO GO MISSING!

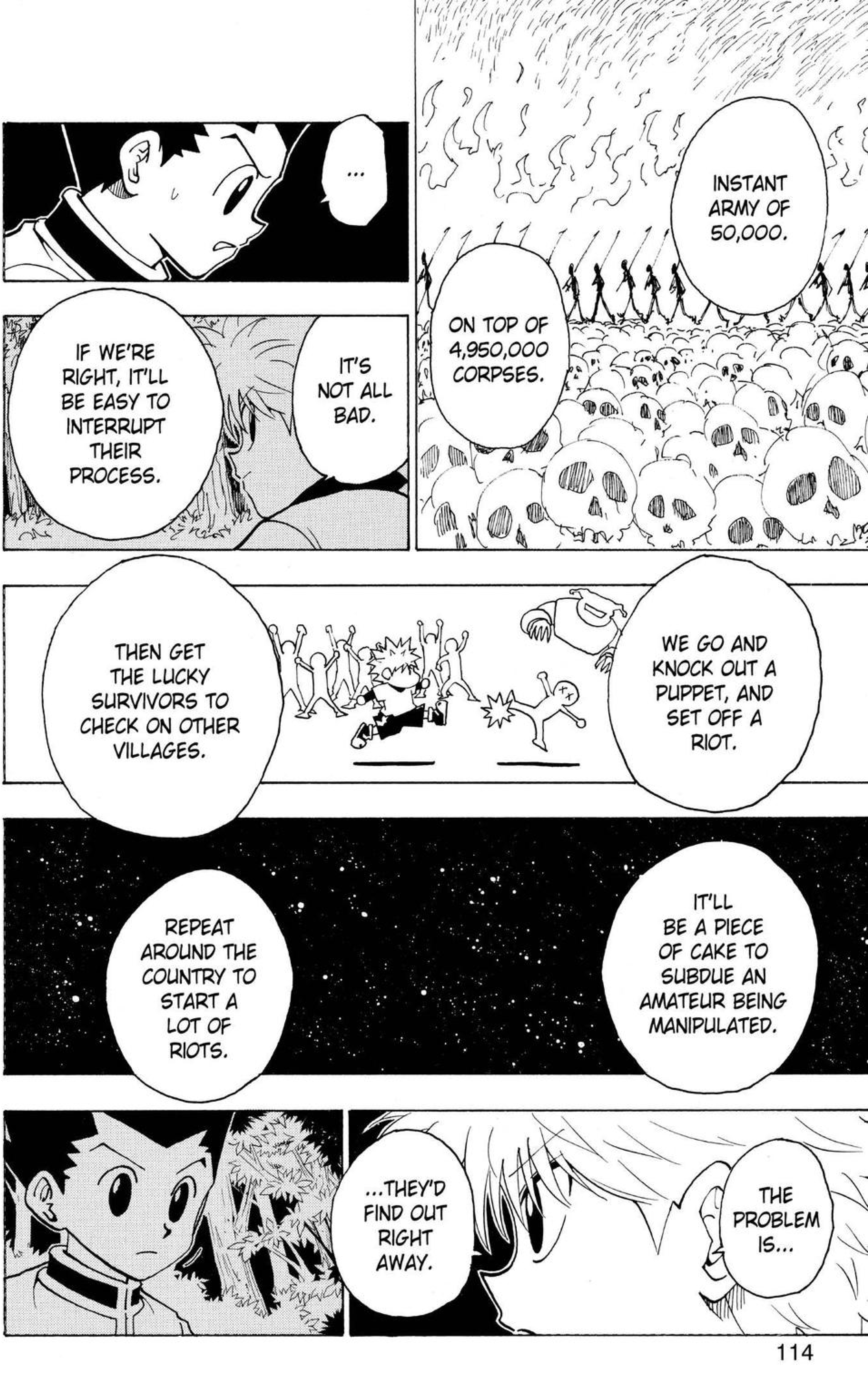

...THE "SELECTION" HAS ALREADY STARTED!!
GETTING THE ENTIRE POPULATION IN ONE PLACE TO SORT THEM AT ONCE...
...IS A HUGE ORDEAL. THERE ARE FIVE MILLION PEOPLE, AFTER ALL.
IT'S MUCH BETTER TO PROCESS ONE TOWN AT A TIME.
PROBLEMS ARISE WHEN FAMILY OR COLLEAGUES SUDDENLY CAN'T CONTACT EACH OTHER, AND START ASKING QUESTIONS.
BUT A NATIONAL RALLY IS THE PERFECT EXCUSE FOR EVERYONE TO BE AWAY FROM HOME FOR A WHILE.

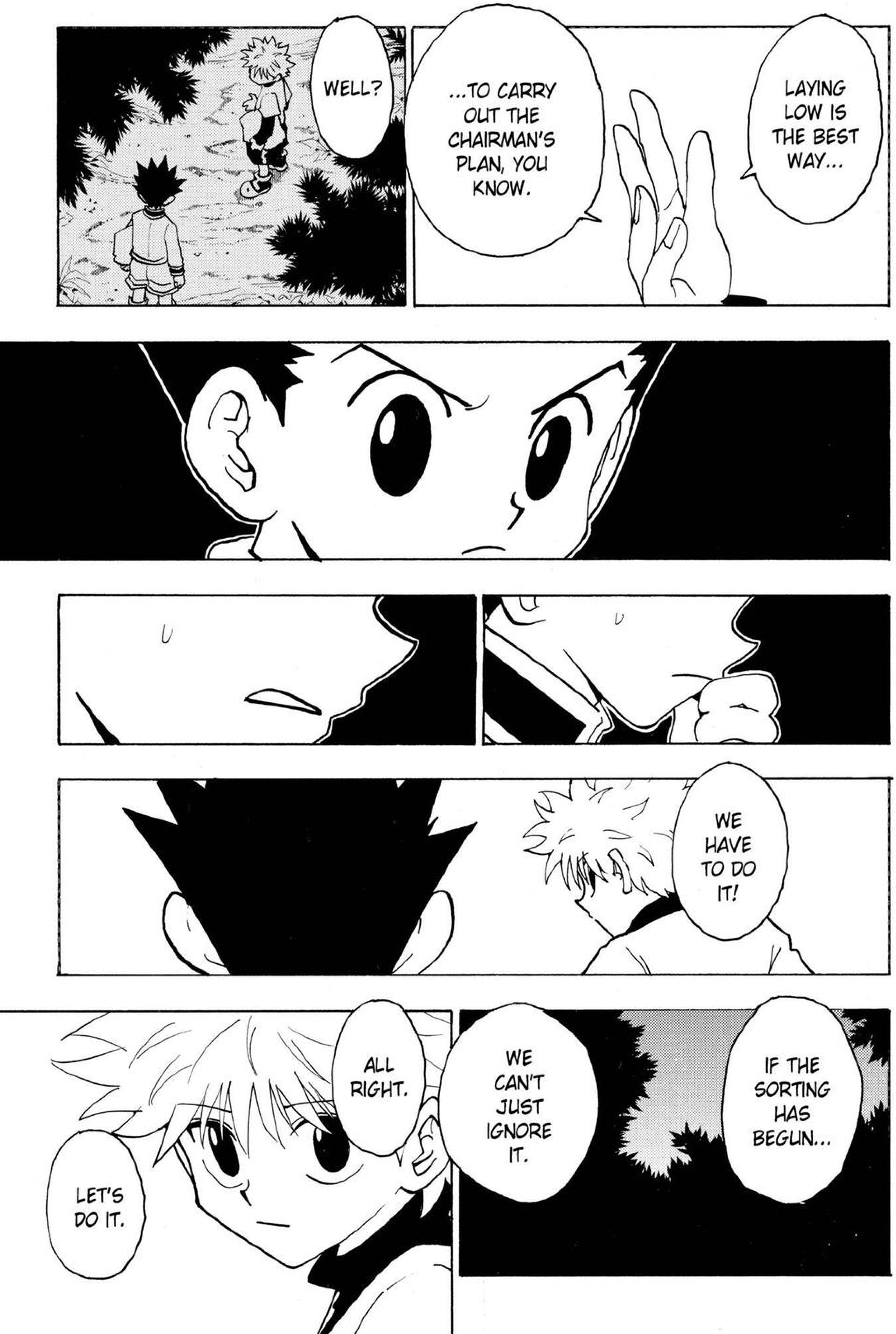
READ THIS WAY

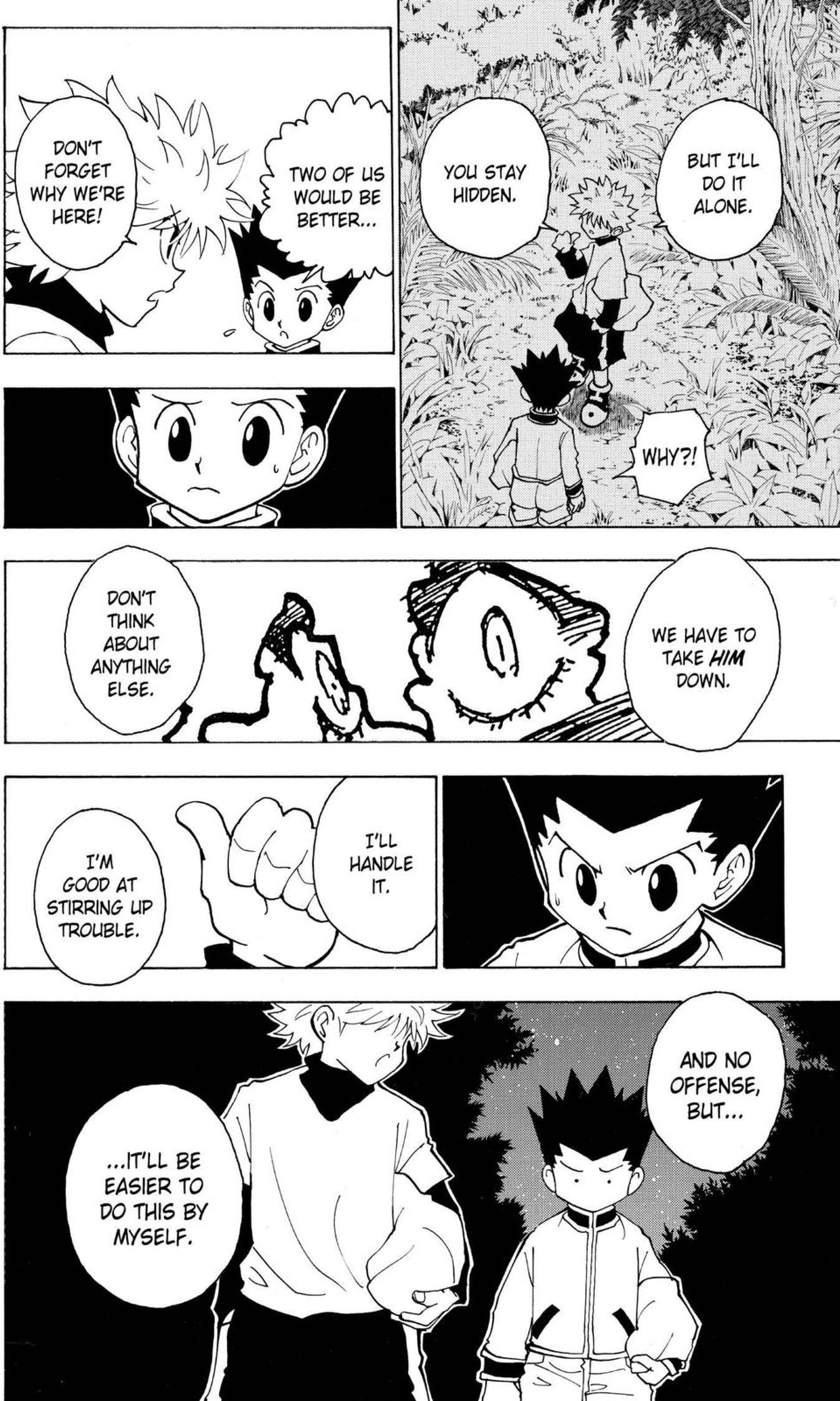

THERE'S A STRICT BAN ON CELL PHONES, SO PEOPLE ARE USED TO BEING UNABLE TO REACH EACH OTHER WHILE ON THE ROAD.
IT MAKES THE ANTS' JOB MUCH EASIER.
PEIJIN IS ON THE SOUTHEASTERN END OF THE COUNTRY.
ALL THEY NEED TO DO IS WORK GRADUALLY EASTWARD...
THE GOVERNMENT CAN ISSUE COMMANDS ABOUT DEPARTURE TIMES TO THE CAPITAL.
PEOPLE CAN'T MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO TRAVEL TOGETHER.
SO THE ANTS CAN AVOID CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE PEOPLE "FAIL TO MEET UP." NOBODY WOULD EVER GUESS...
BUT...
HM?


THEY HAVE TO GO AROUND PUNCHING FIVE MILLION PEOPLE.
YEAH... EVEN IF ONLY 1 PERCENT SURVIVE, THEY'LL HAVE 50,000 NEW SOLDIERS.
NO, BEFORE WE GET TO THAT.
THEY HAVE TEN-- OR ACTUALLY, NINE DAYS NOW.
IN ORDER TO SORT FIVE MILLION PEOPLE...
...THEY'D NEED A LOT OF PEOPLE TO ***DO*** THE SORTING.
SAY ONE PERSON CAN SORT 10,000 PEOPLE IN TEN DAYS...
UMMM...
YEAH, 500 SORTERS.
YOU'RE SAYING THEY DON'T HAVE THAT MANY SOLDIER ANTS WITH NEN?
YEAH.
I AGREE WITH YOU.
BUT ACTU-ALLY...
?
THE SORTER DOESN'T EVEN NEED TO KNOW NEN.
WHY NOT?

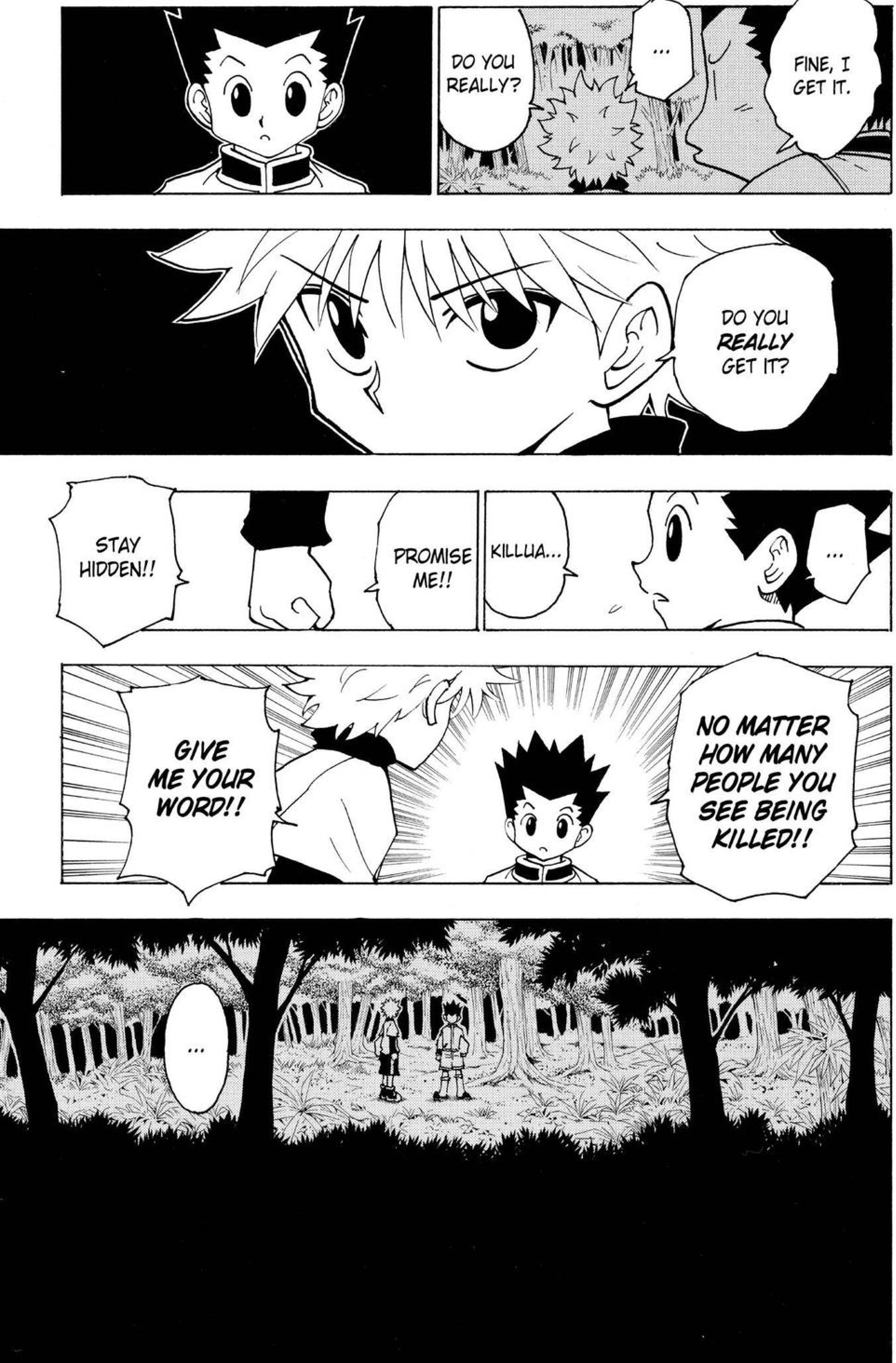

BECAUSE THEY CAN BE ***MANIPULATED.***
THAT'S HIS ABILITY.
IT CAN BE ON AUTOPILOT, AND HE CAN PROBABLY HANDLE QUITE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT THE SAME TIME, LIKE GENTHRU.
EVEN NORMAL PEOPLE HAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF AURA.
FORCE THAT AURA INTO THE FIST, HIT THE TARGET...

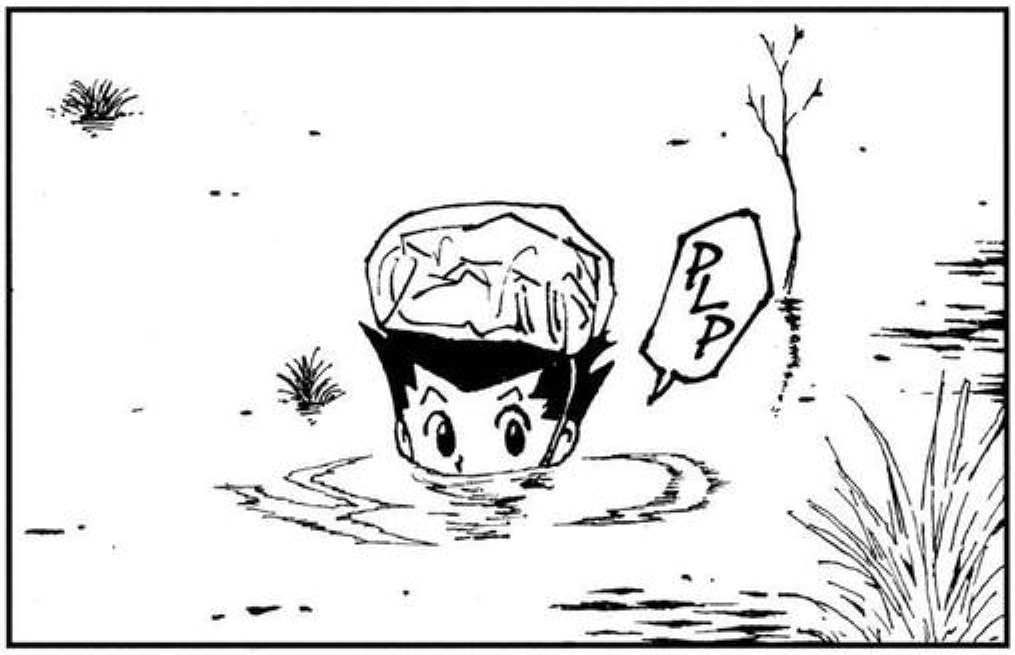

INSTANT ARMY OF 50,000.
ON TOP OF 4,950,000 CORPSES.
...
IT'S NOT ALL BAD.
IF WE'RE RIGHT, IT'LL BE EASY TO INTERRUPT THEIR PROCESS.
WE GO AND KNOCK OUT A PUPPET, AND SET OFF A RIOT.
THEN GET THE LUCKY SURVIVORS TO CHECK ON OTHER VILLAGES.
IT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE TO SUBDUE AN AMATEUR BEING MANIPULATED.
REPEAT AROUND THE COUNTRY TO START A LOT OF RIOTS.
THE PROBLEM IS...
...THEY'D FIND OUT RIGHT AWAY.


LAYING LOW IS THE BEST WAY...
...TO CARRY OUT THE CHAIRMAN'S PLAN, YOU KNOW.
WELL?
WE HAVE TO DO IT!
IF THE SORTING HAS BEGUN...
WE CAN'T JUST IGNORE IT.
ALL RIGHT.
LET'S DO IT.

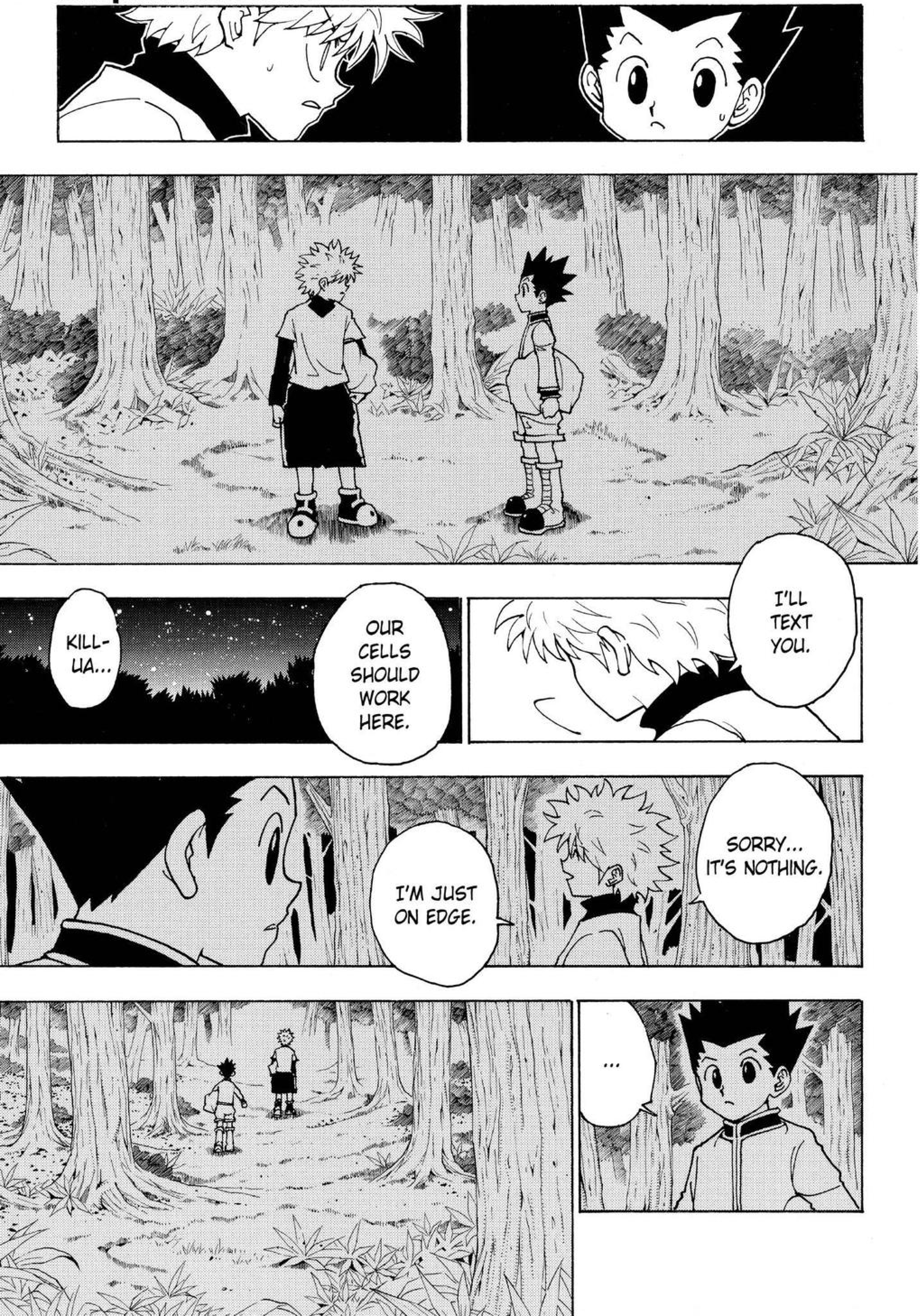

BUT I'LL DO IT ALONE.
YOU STAY HIDDEN.
WHY?!
TWO OF US WOULD BE BETTER...
DON'T FORGET WHY WE'RE HERE!
WE HAVE TO TAKE *HIM* DOWN.
DON'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.
I'LL HANDLE IT.
I'M GOOD AT STIRRING UP TROUBLE.
AND NO OFFENSE, BUT...
...IT'LL BE EASIER TO DO THIS BY MYSELF.

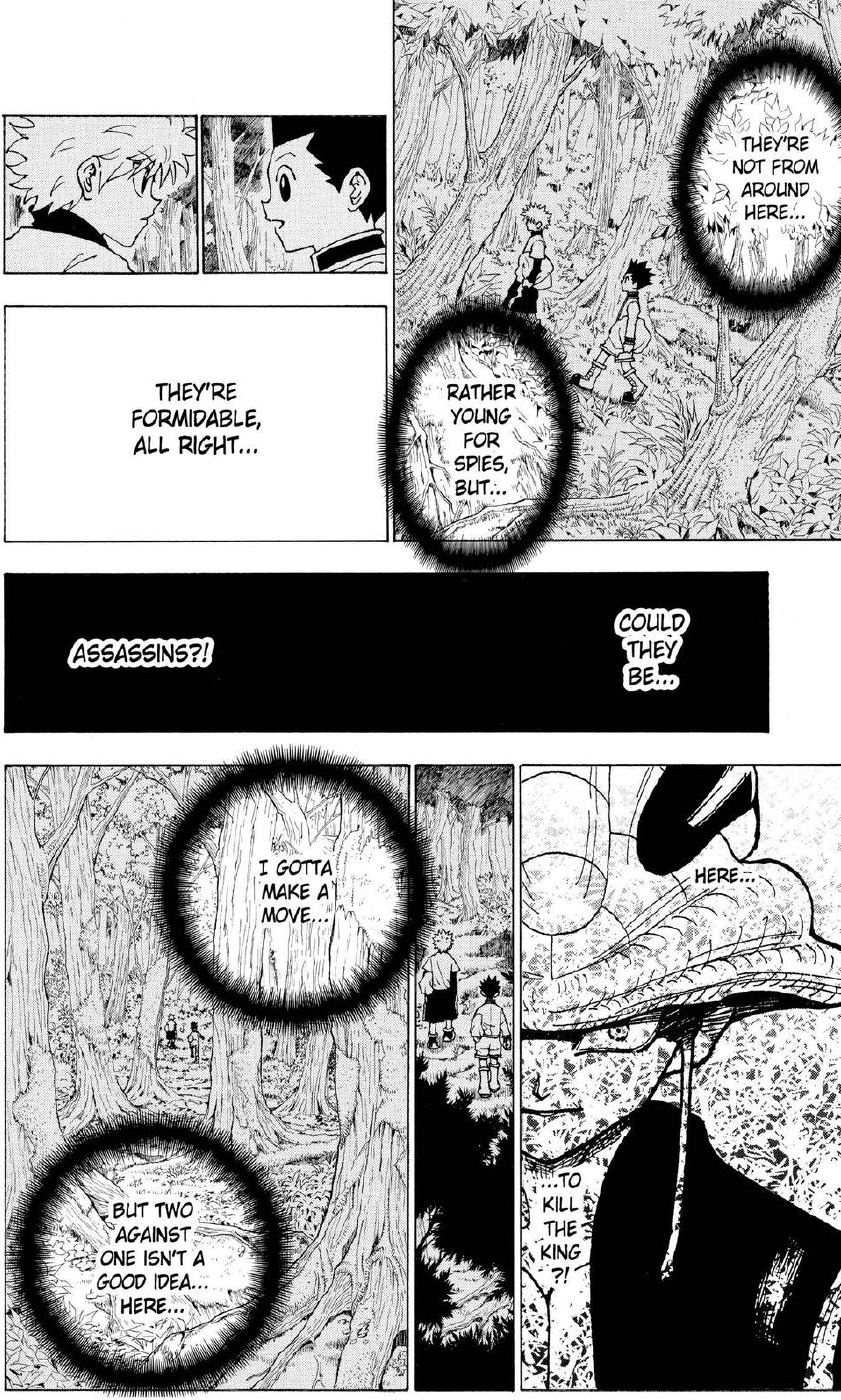
READ THIS WAY

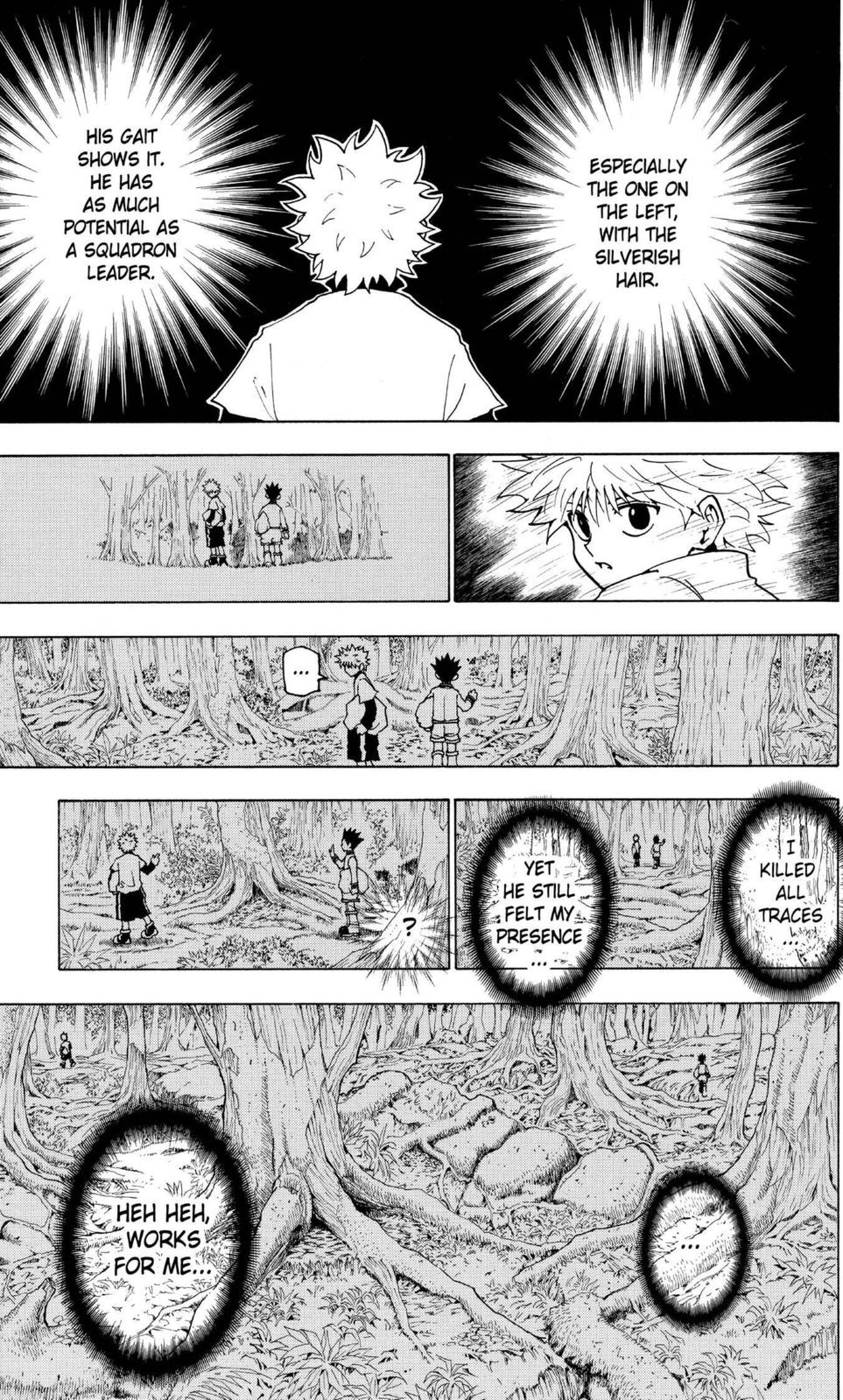

FINE, I GET IT.
...
DO YOU REALLY?
DO YOU REALLY GET IT?
...
KILLUA...
PROMISE ME!!
STAY HIDDEN!!
NO MATTER HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU SEE BEING KILLED!!
GIVE ME YOUR WORD!!
...

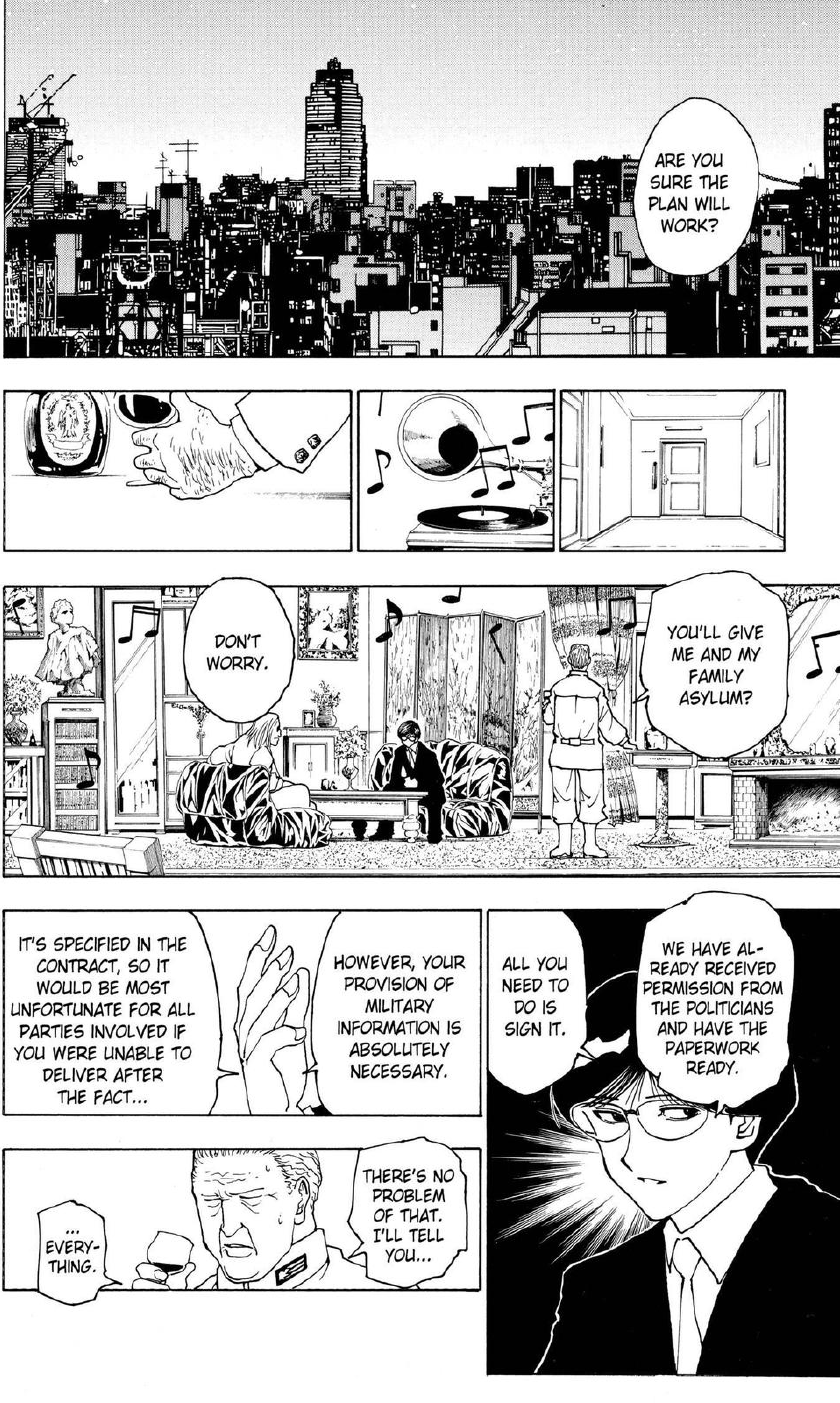

PLP

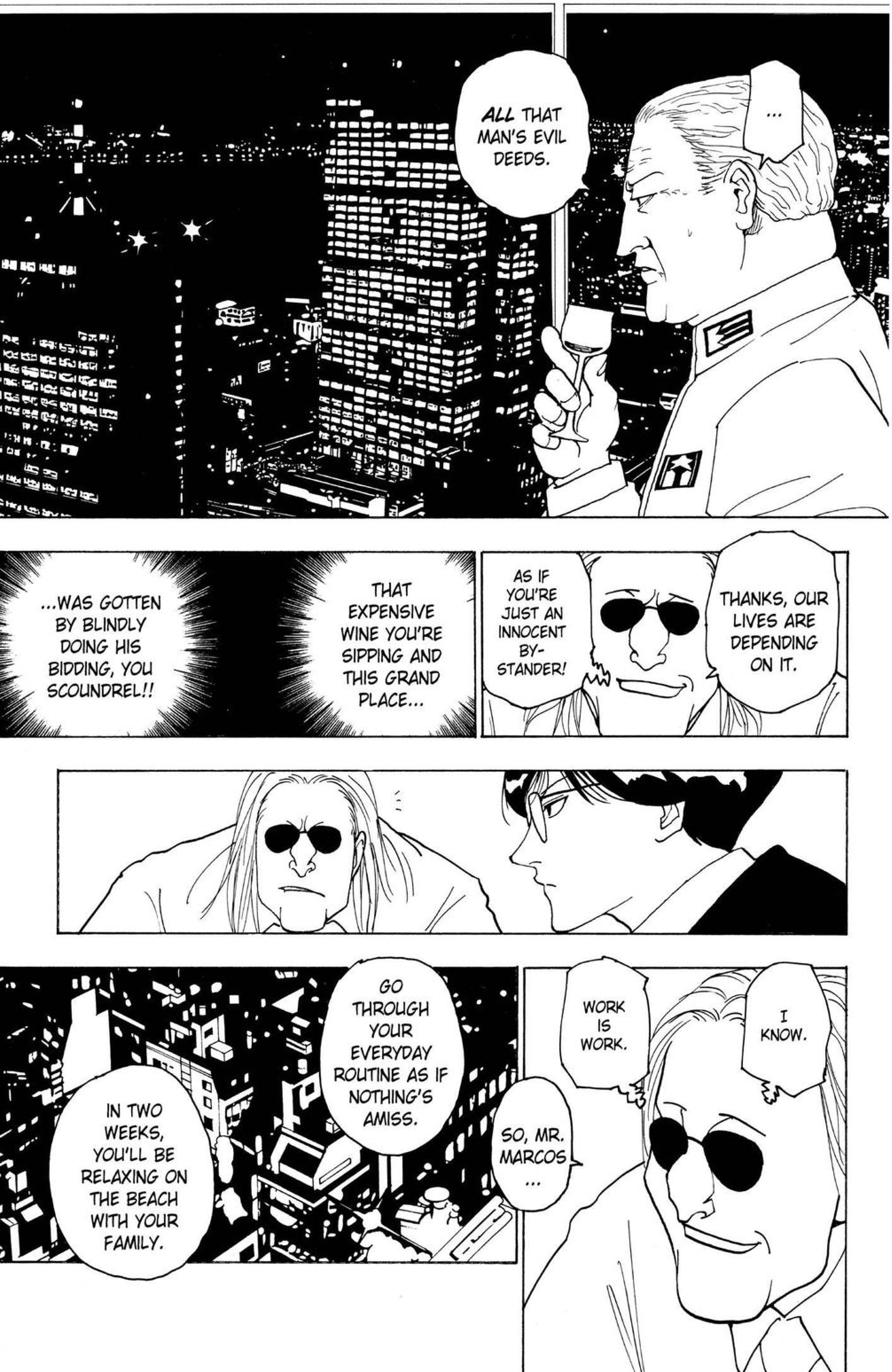
Chapter 231: 9: Part 2

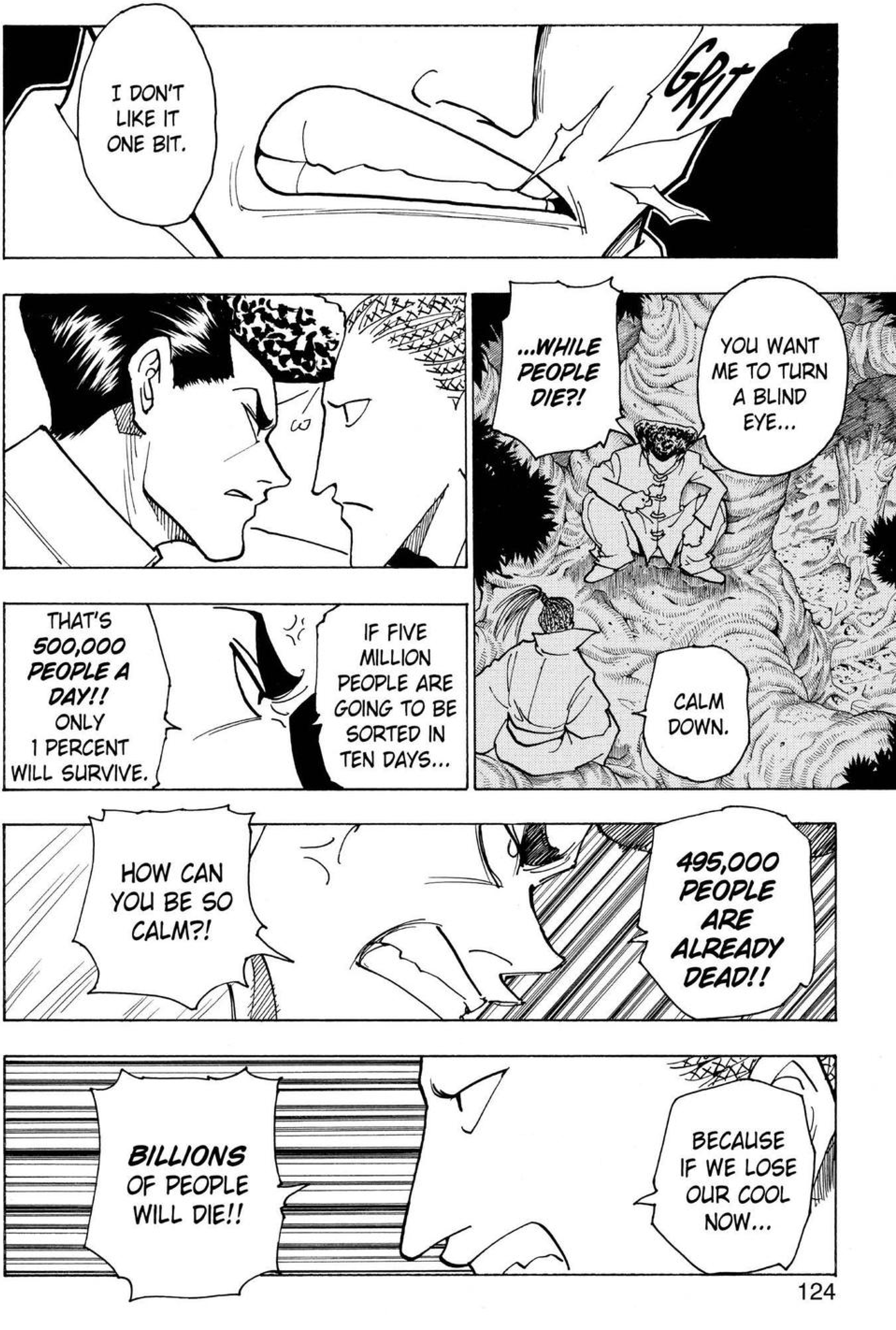

I'LL TEXT YOU.
OUR CELLS SHOULD WORK HERE.
KILL-UA...
SORRY... IT'S NOTHING.
I'M JUST ON EDGE.
...

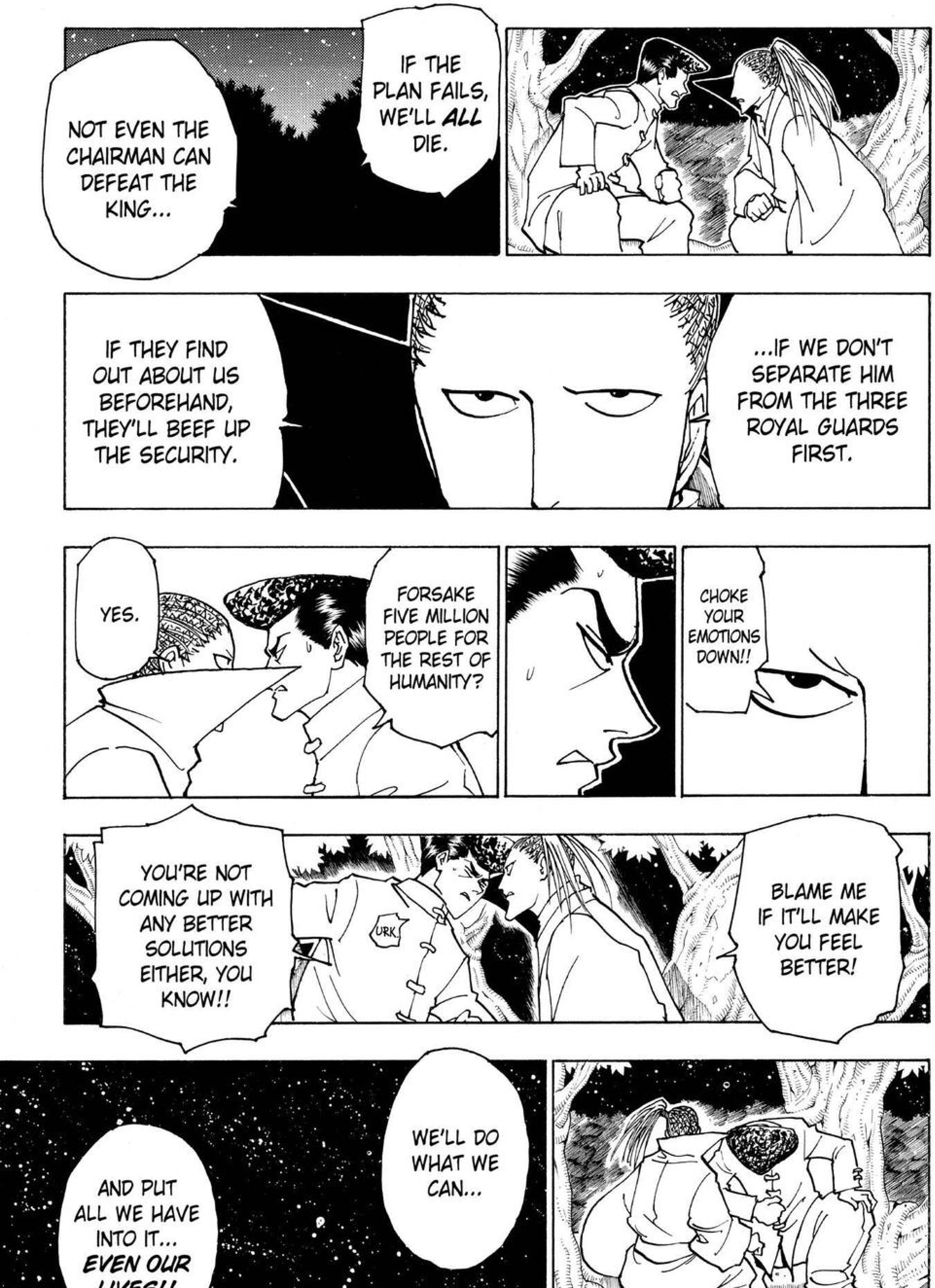

THEY'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE...
RATHER YOUNG FOR SPIES, BUT...
THEY'RE FORMIDABLE, ALL RIGHT...
COULD THEY BE...
ASSASSINS?!
HERE...
...TO KILL THE KING?!
I GOTTA MAKE A MOVE...
BUT TWO AGAINST ONE ISN'T A GOOD IDEA... HERE...

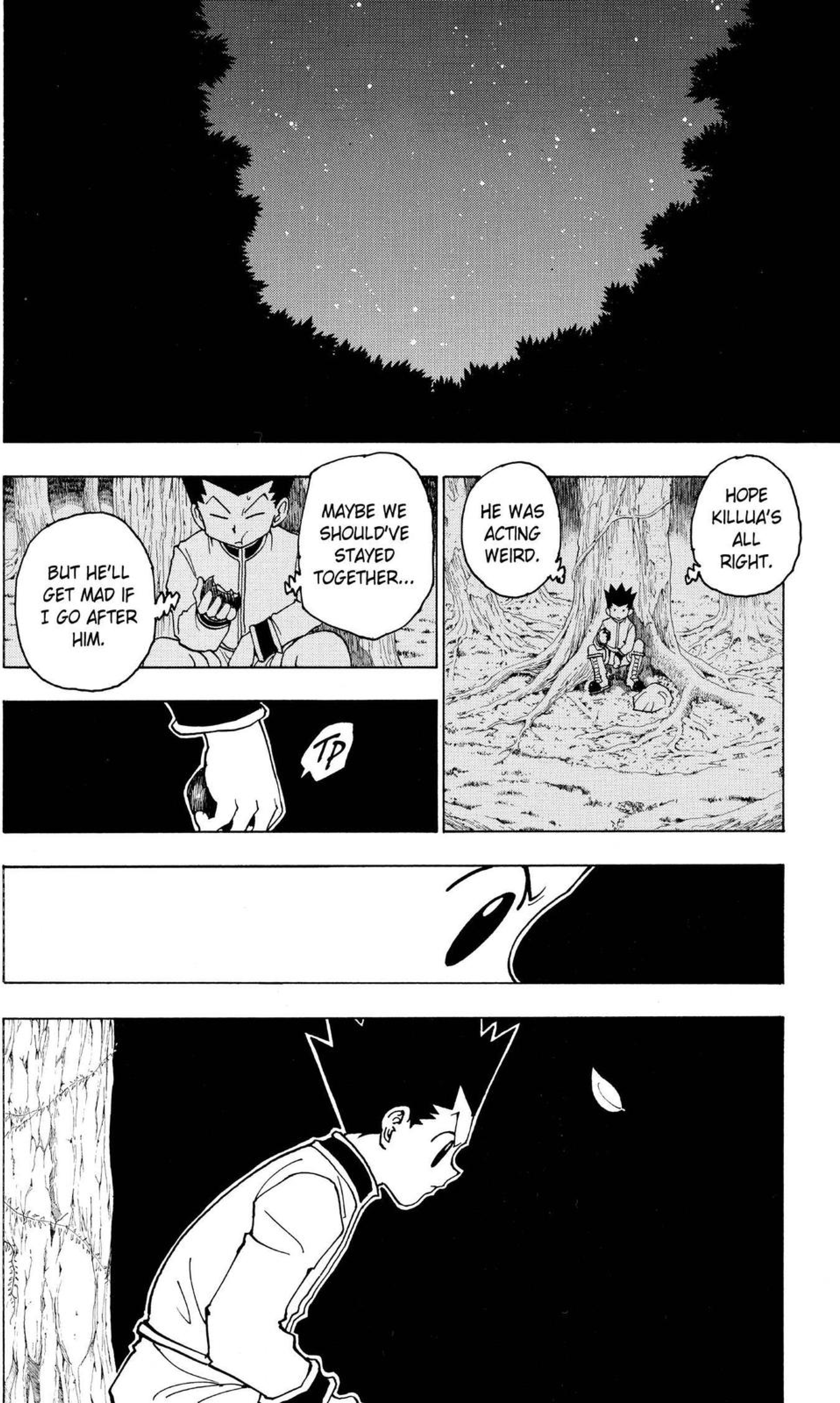

ESPECIALLY THE ONE ON THE LEFT, WITH THE SILVERISH HAIR.
HIS GAIT SHOWS IT. HE HAS AS MUCH POTENTIAL AS A SQUADRON LEADER.
...
I KILLED ALL TRACES...
YET HE STILL FELT MY PRESENCE...
?
...
HEH HEH, WORKS FOR ME...

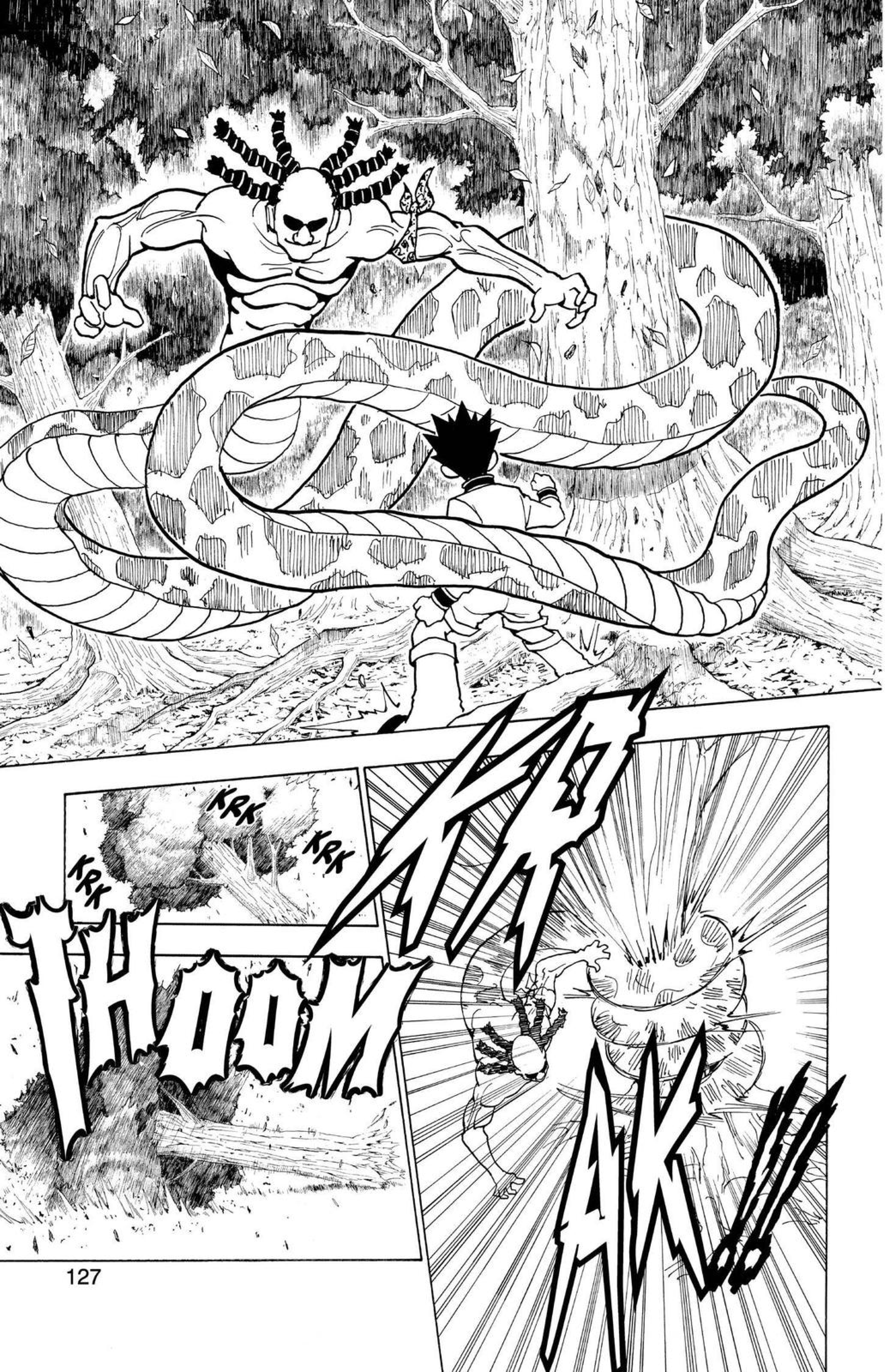

ARE YOU SURE THE PLAN WILL WORK?
YOU'LL GIVE ME AND MY FAMILY ASYLUM?
DON'T WORRY.
WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM THE POLITICIANS AND HAVE THE PAPERWORK READY.
ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS SIGN IT.
HOWEVER, YOUR PROVISION OF MILITARY INFORMATION IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
IT'S SPECIFIED IN THE CONTRACT, SO IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE FOR ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IF YOU WERE UNABLE TO DELIVER AFTER THE FACT...
THERE'S NO PROBLEM OF THAT. I'LL TELL YOU...
... EVERYTHING.

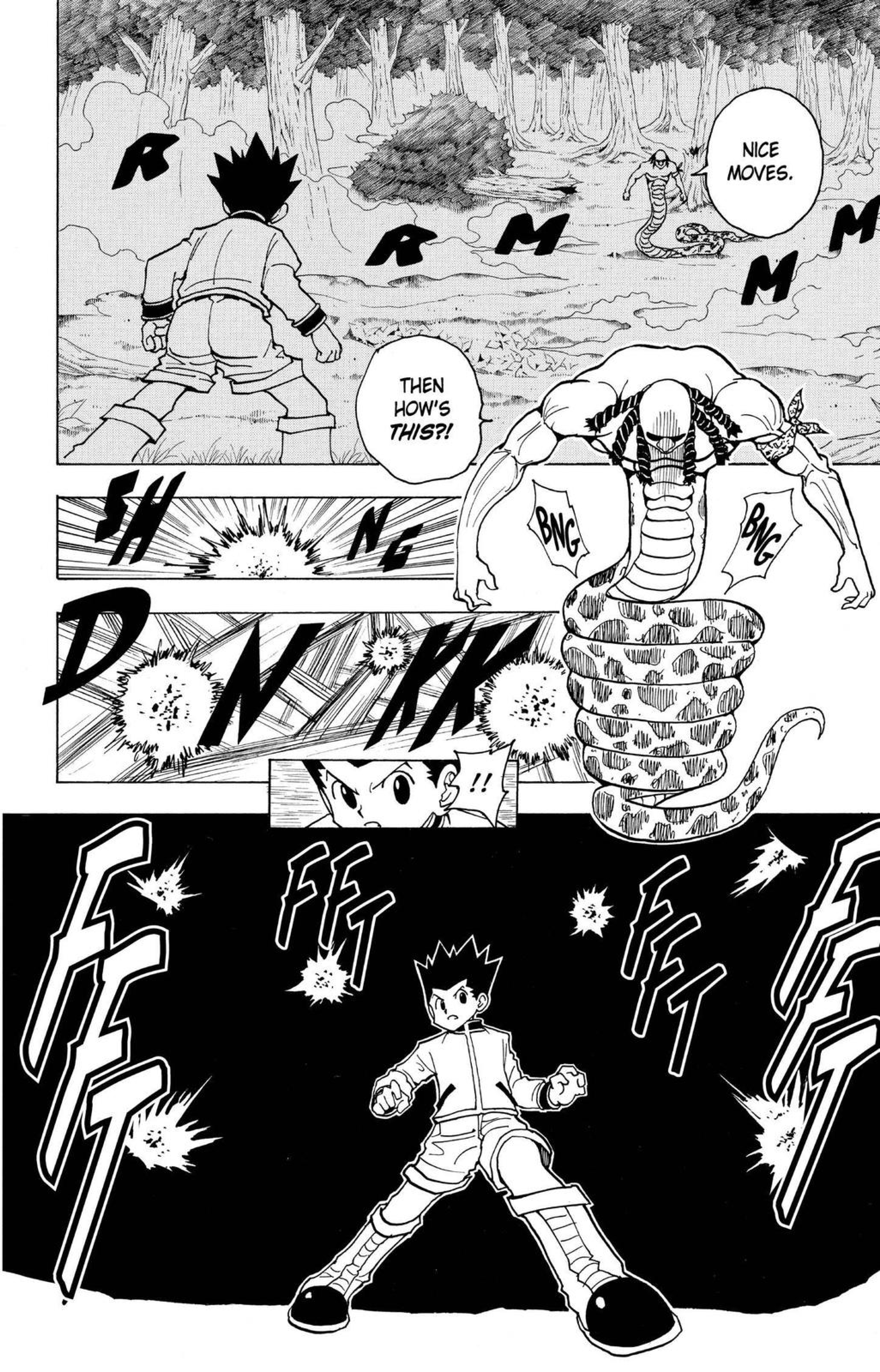

...
ALL THAT MAN'S EVIL DEEDS.
THANKS, OUR LIVES ARE DEPENDING ON IT.
AS IF YOU'RE JUST AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER!
THAT EXPENSIVE WINE YOU'RE SIPPING AND THIS GRAND PLACE...
...WAS GOTTEN BY BLINDLY DOING HIS BIDDING, YOU SCOUNDREL!!
I KNOW.
WORK IS WORK.
SO, MR. MARCOS...
GO THROUGH YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE AS IF NOTHING'S AMISS.
IN TWO WEEKS, YOU'LL BE RELAXING ON THE BEACH WITH YOUR FAMILY.

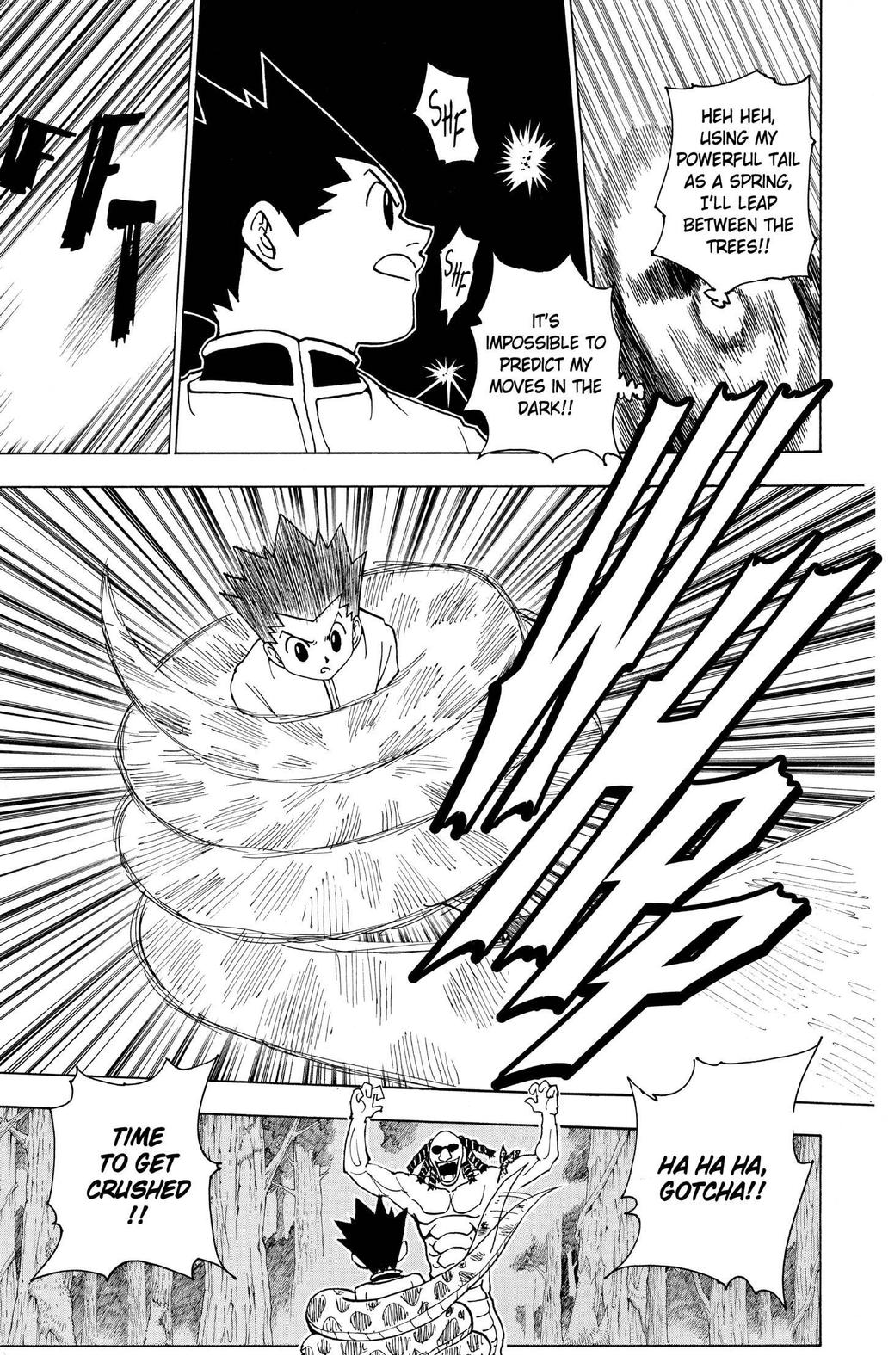

GRIT
I DON'T LIKE IT ONE BIT.
YOU WANT ME TO TURN A BLIND EYE...
...WHILE PEOPLE DIE?!
CALM DOWN.
IF FIVE MILLION PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE SORTED IN TEN DAYS...
THAT'S 500,000 PEOPLE A DAY!! ONLY 1 PERCENT WILL SURVIVE.
495,000 PEOPLE ARE ALREADY DEAD!!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?!
BECAUSE IF WE LOSE OUR COOL NOW...
BILLIONS OF PEOPLE WILL DIE!!

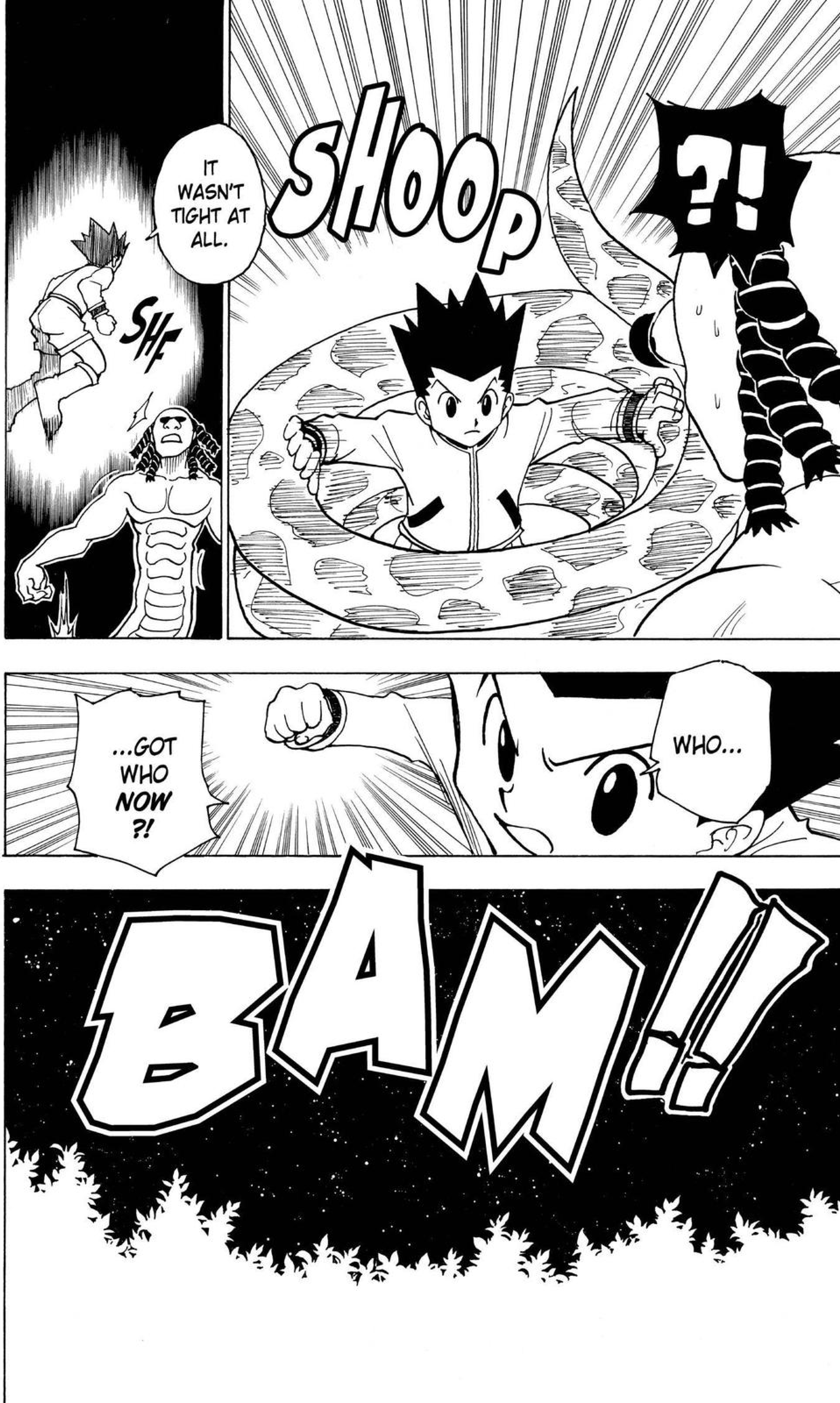

IF THE PLAN FAILS, WE'LL *ALL* DIE.
NOT EVEN THE CHAIRMAN CAN DEFEAT THE KING...
...IF WE DON'T SEPARATE HIM FROM THE THREE ROYAL GUARDS FIRST.
IF THEY FIND OUT ABOUT US BEFOREHAND, THEY'LL BEEF UP THE SECURITY.
CHOKE YOUR EMOTIONS DOWN!!
FORSAKE FIVE MILLION PEOPLE FOR THE REST OF HUMANITY?
YES.
BLAME ME IF IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER!
URK.
YOU'RE NOT COMING UP WITH ANY BETTER SOLUTIONS EITHER, YOU KNOW!!
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN...
AND PUT ALL WE HAVE INTO IT... ***EVEN OUR LIVES!!***

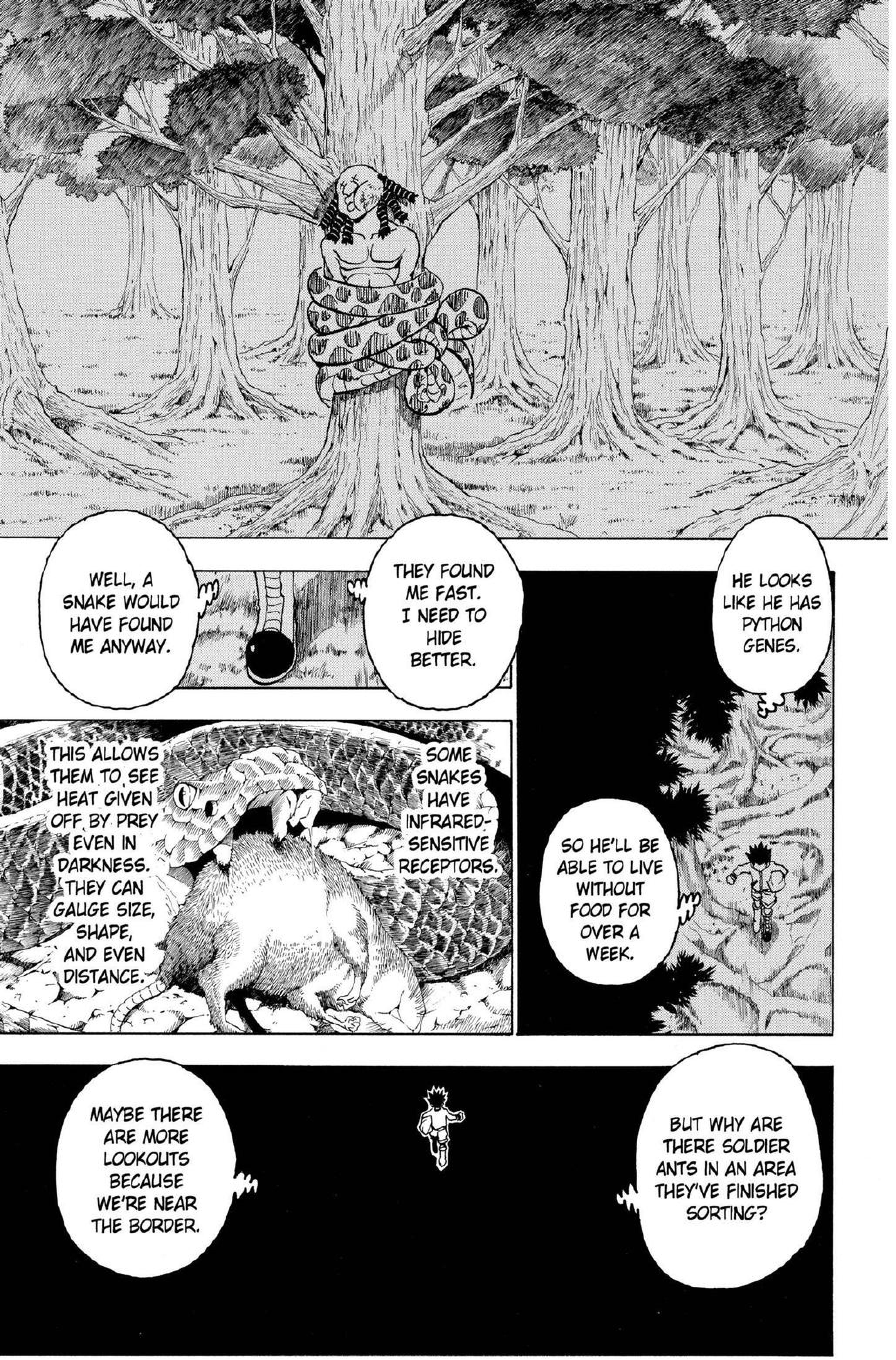

HOPE KILLUA'S ALL RIGHT.
HE WAS ACTING WEIRD.
MAYBE WE SHOULD'VE STAYED TOGETHER...
BUT HE'LL GET MAD IF I GO AFTER HIM.
TP

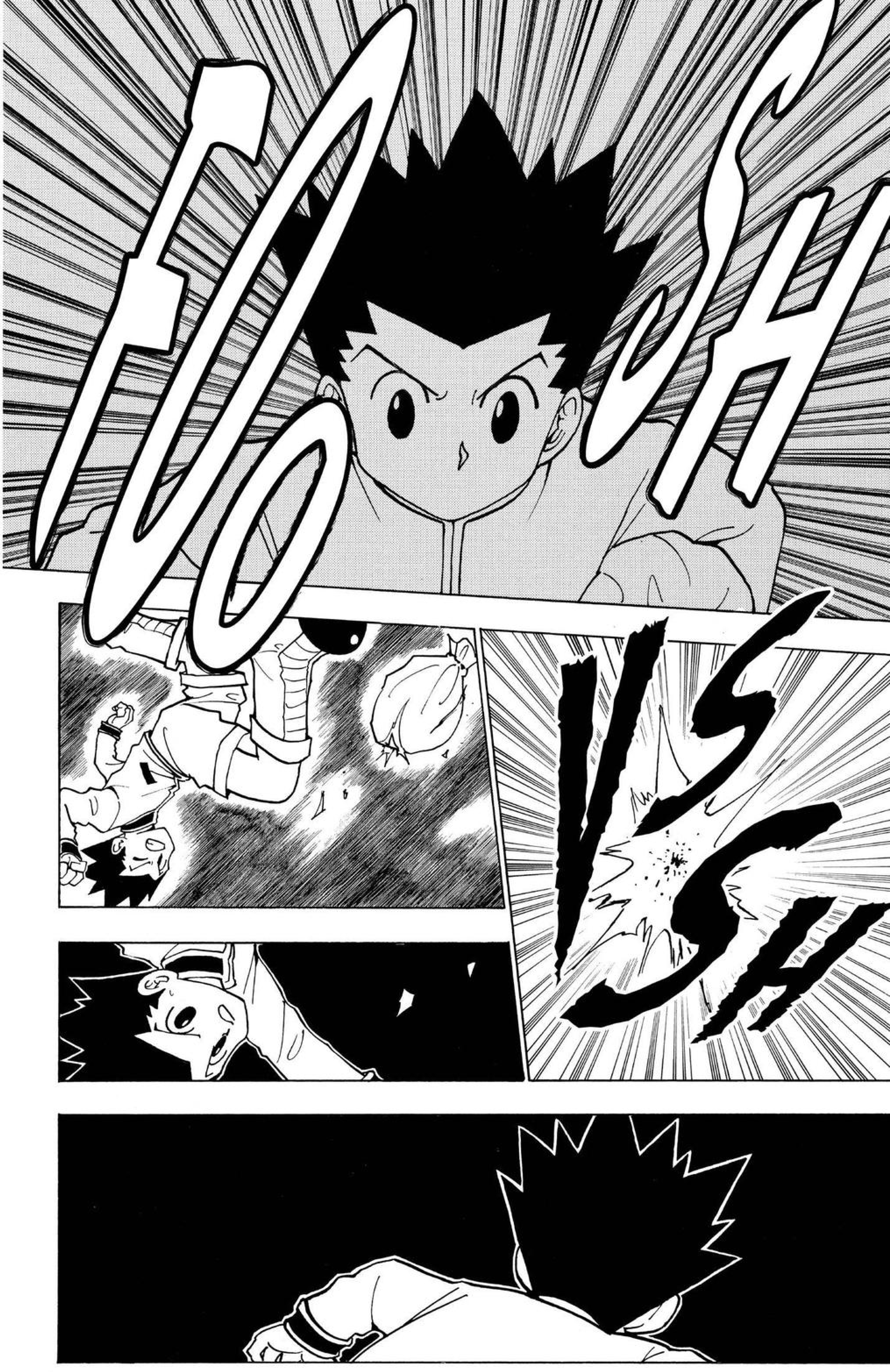

KA
AK!!
KRK
KRK
KRK
THOOM

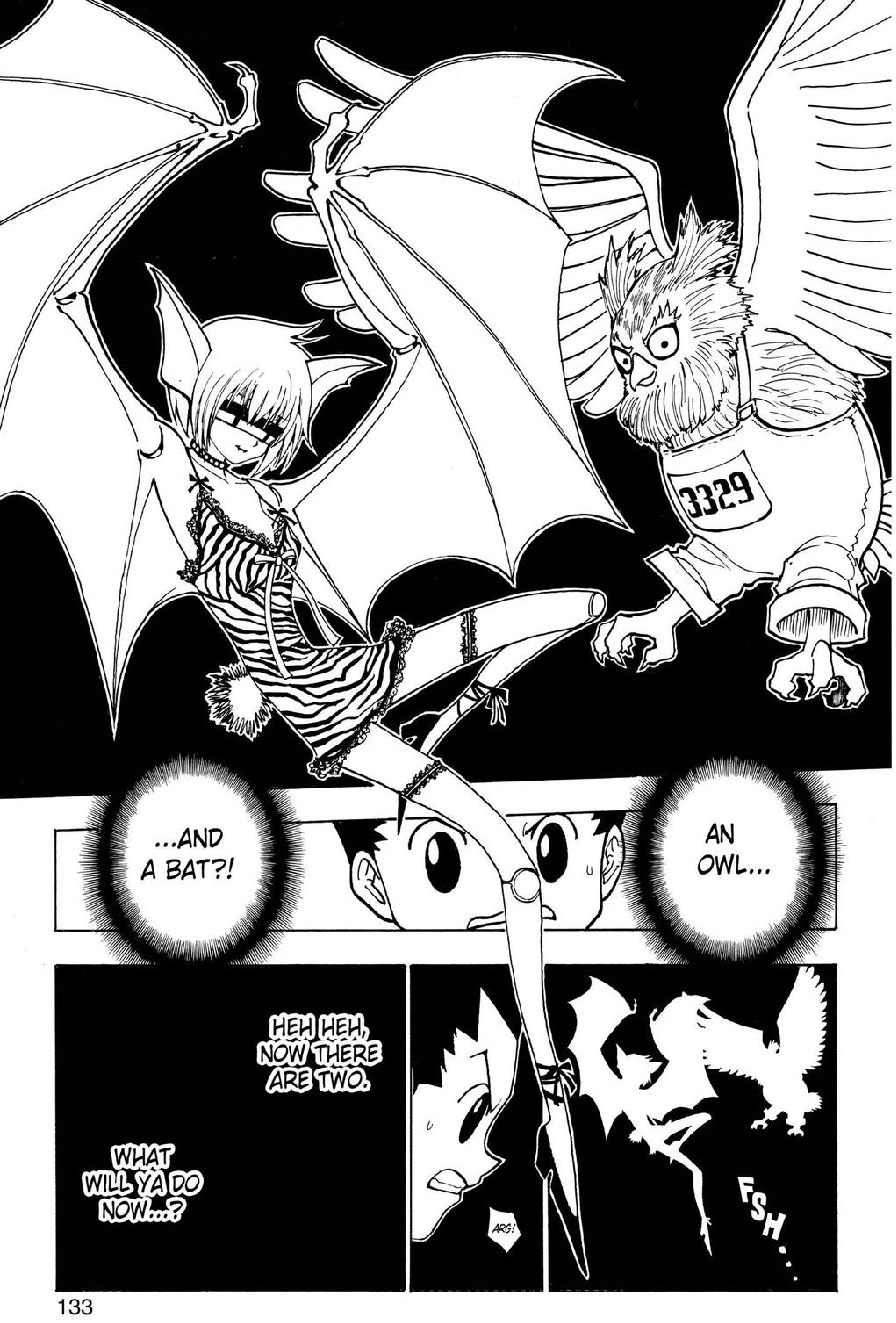

NICE MOVES.
RRRMMMM
THEN HOW'S *THIS?!*
BNG
BNG
SHNG
DNKK
!!
FFFT
FFT
FFT
FFFT

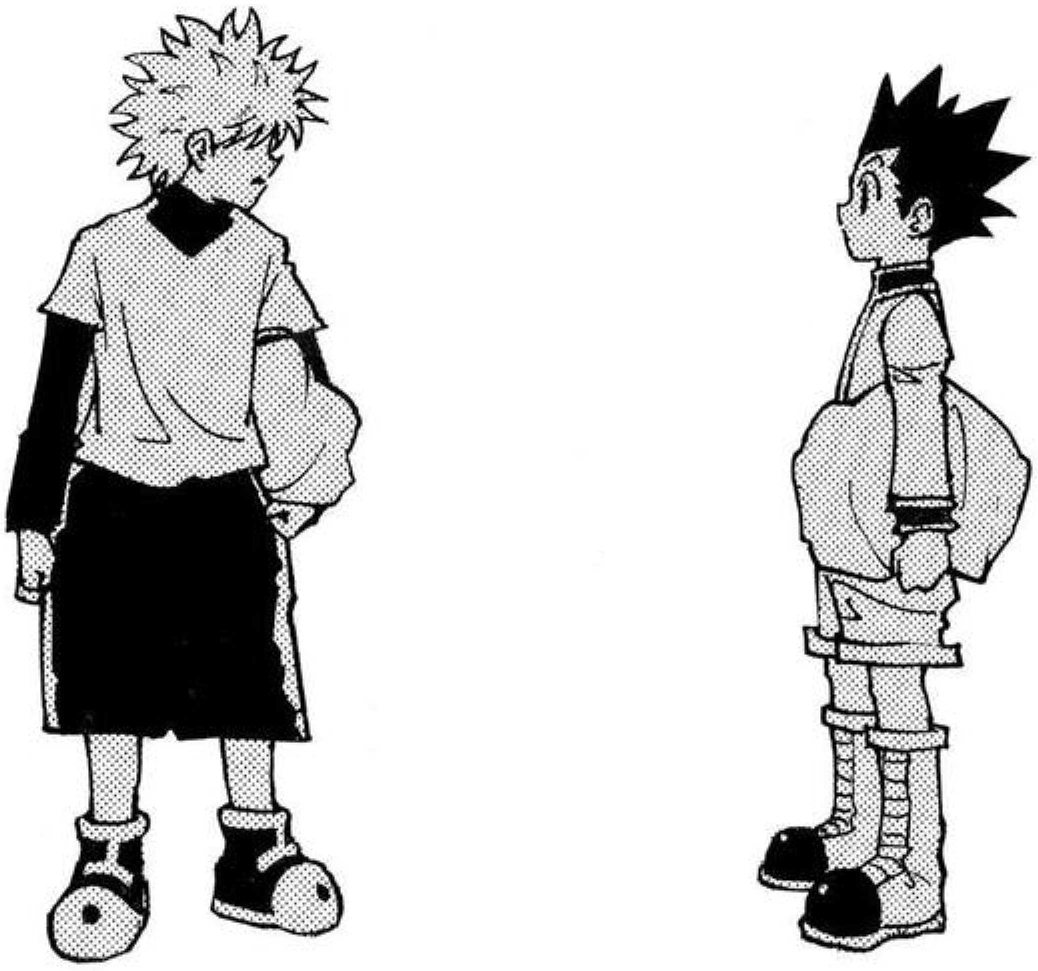

HEH HEH, USING MY POWERFUL TAIL AS A SPRING, I'LL LEAP BETWEEN THE TREES!!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT MY MOVES IN THE DARK!!
SHF
SHF
FFT
WHAP
HA HA HA, GOTCHA!!
TIME TO GET CRUSHED!!

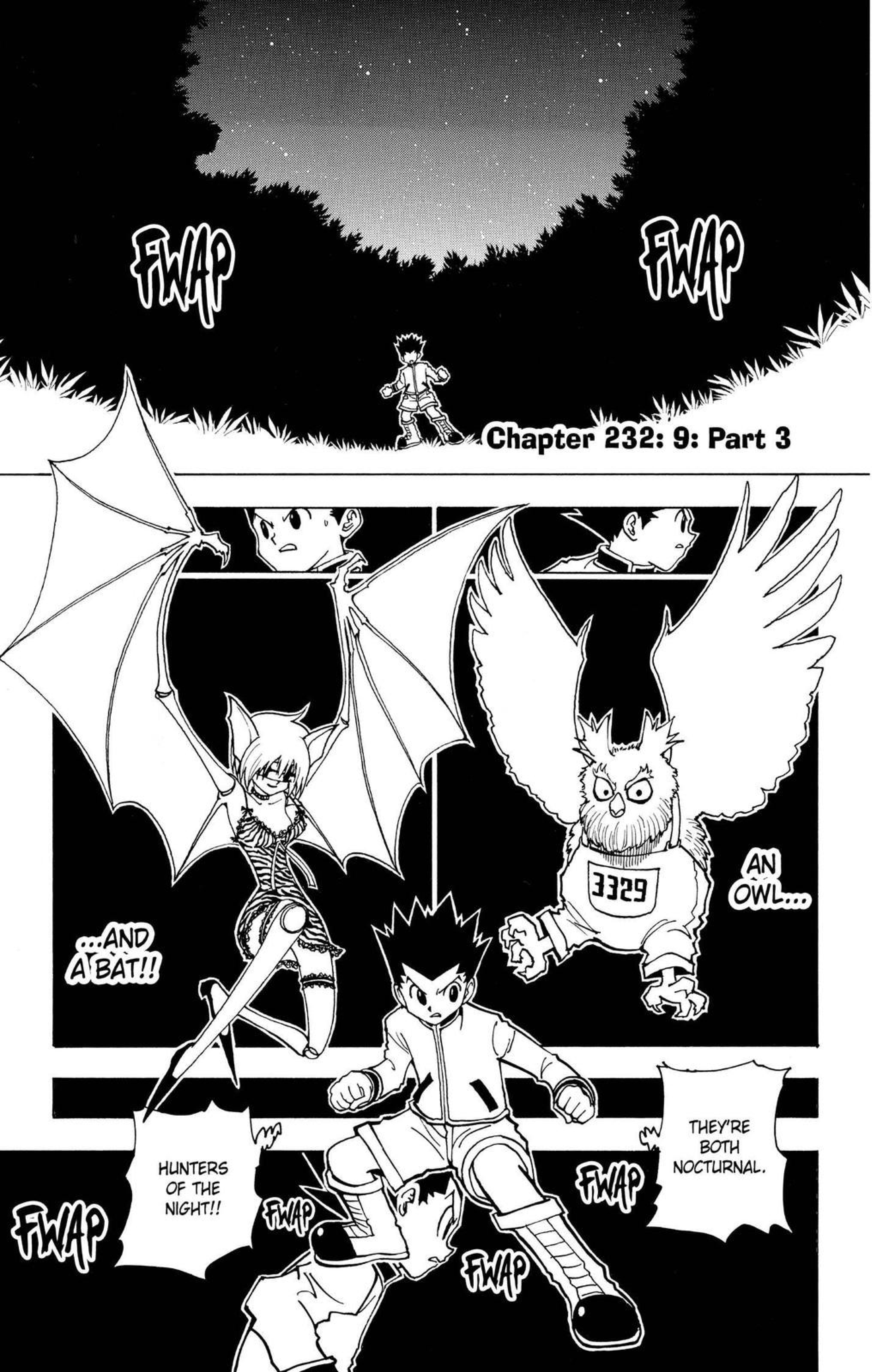

?!
SHOOP
IT WASN'T TIGHT AT ALL.
SHF
WHO...
...GOT WHO NOW?!
BAM!!


HE LOOKS LIKE HE HAS PYTHON GENES.
SO HE'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE WITHOUT FOOD FOR OVER A WEEK.
THEY FOUND ME FAST. I NEED TO HIDE BETTER.
WELL, A SNAKE WOULD HAVE FOUND ME ANYWAY.
SOME SNAKES HAVE INFRARED-SENSITIVE RECEPTORS.
THIS ALLOWS THEM TO SEE HEAT GIVEN OFF BY PREY EVEN IN DARKNESS. THEY CAN GAUGE SIZE, SHAPE, AND EVEN DISTANCE.
BUT WHY ARE THERE SOLDIER ANTS IN AN AREA THEY'VE FINISHED SORTING?
MAYBE THERE ARE MORE LOOKOUTS BECAUSE WE'RE NEAR THE BORDER.


FOOSH
VSSH

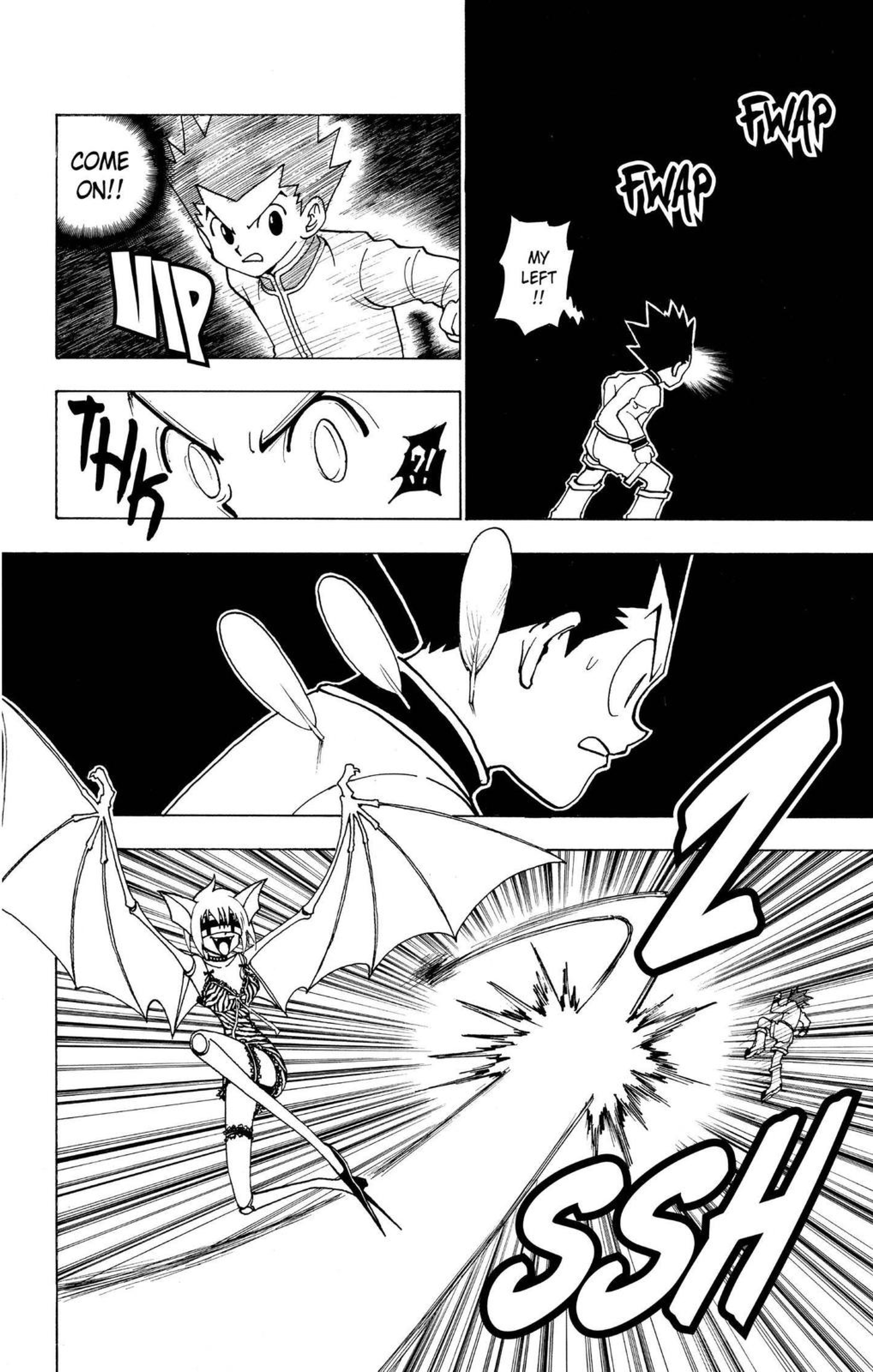

3329
AN OWL...
...AND A BAT?!
FSH...
ARG!
HEH HEH, NOW THERE ARE TWO.
WHAT WILL YA DO NOW...?

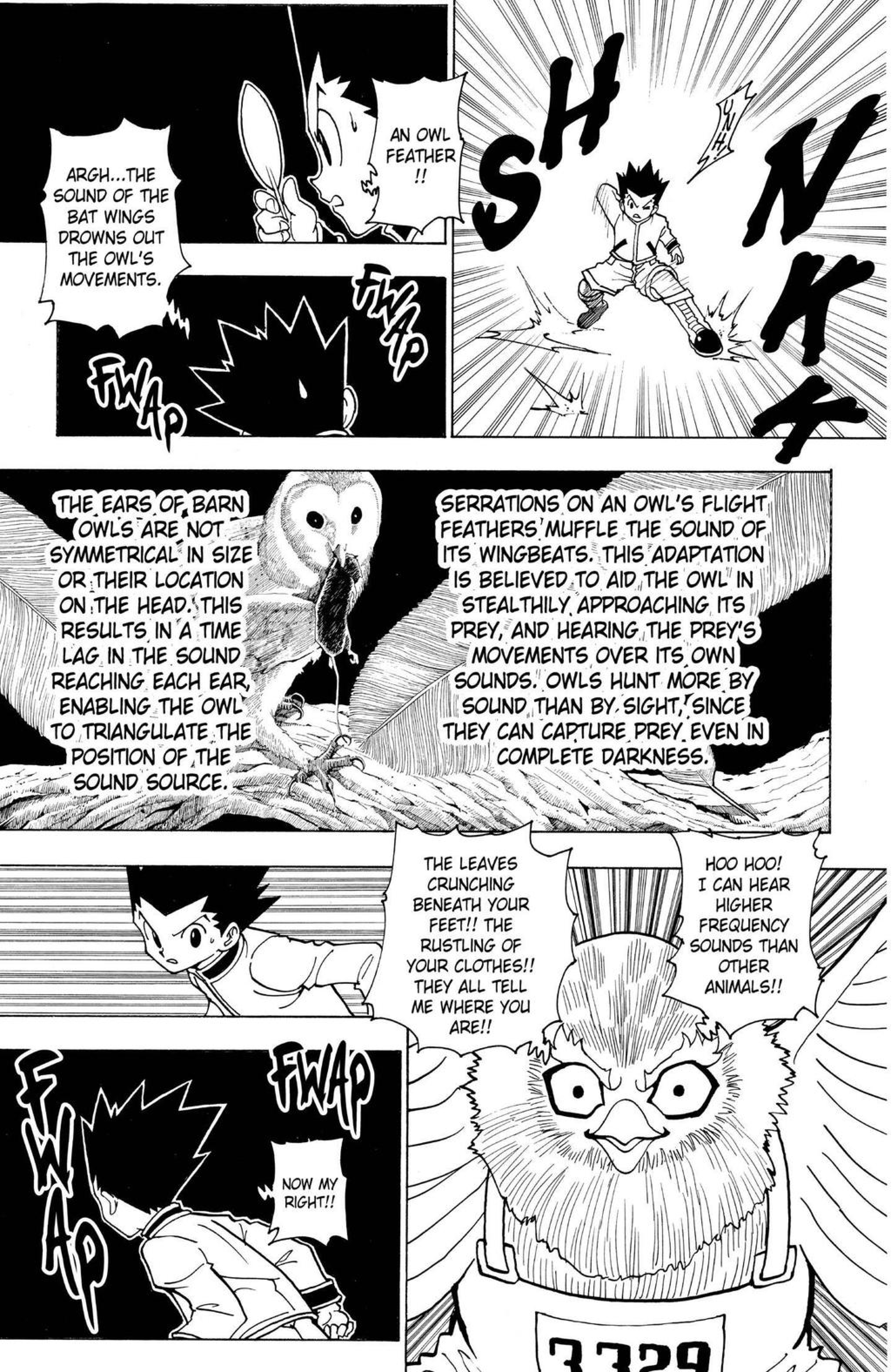


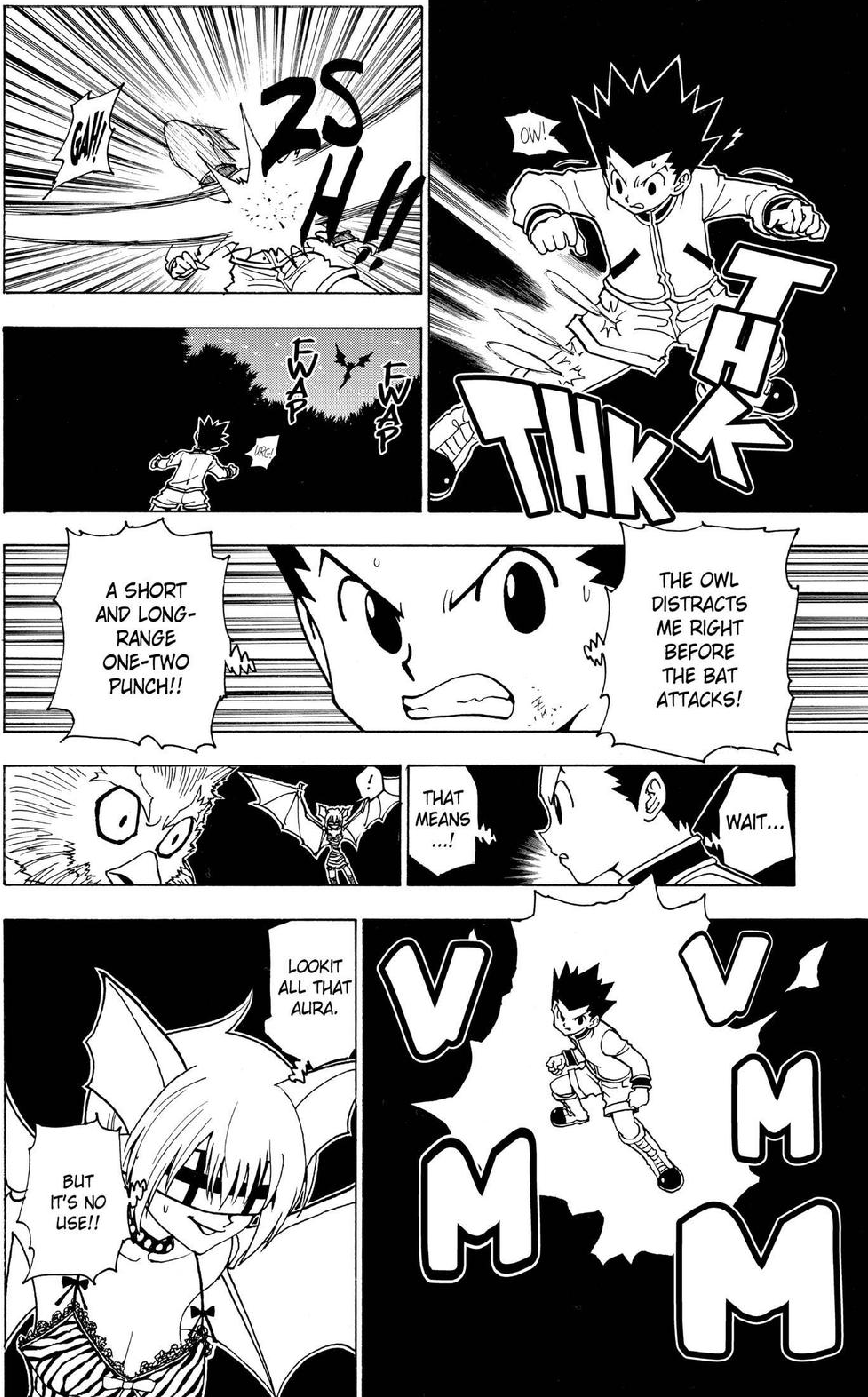


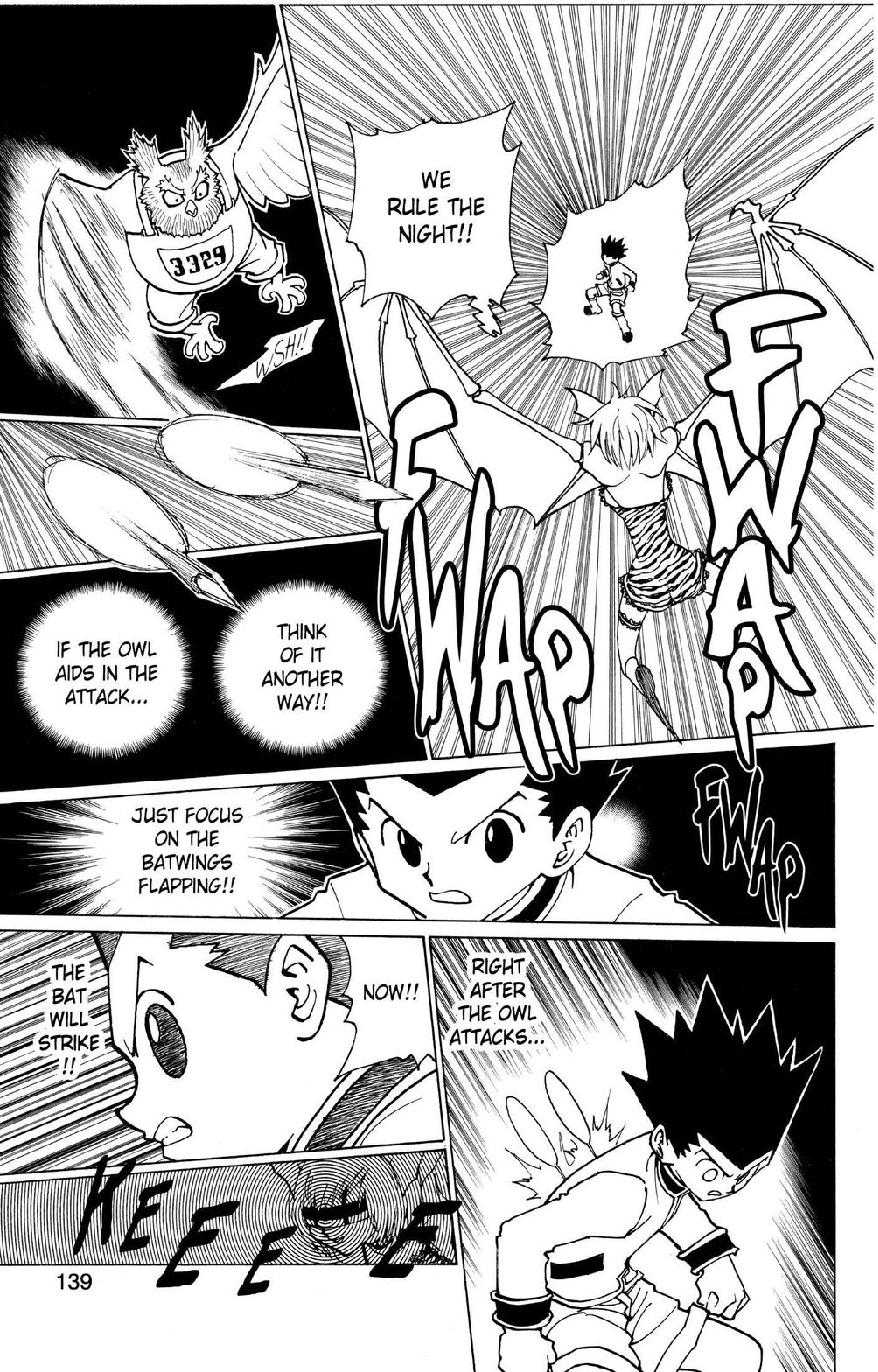
Chapter 232: 9: Part 3

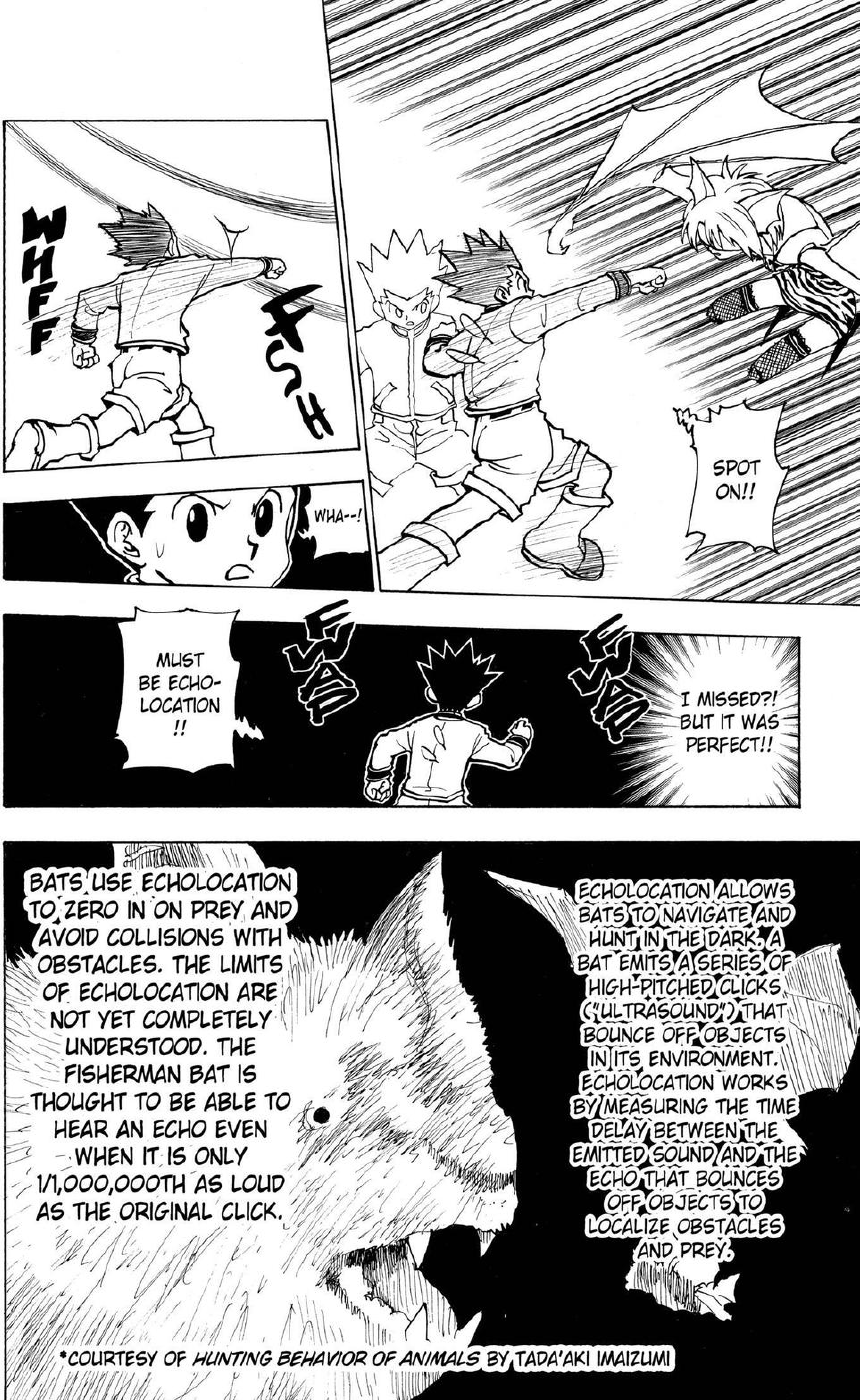
FWAP
FWAP
AN OWL...
...AND A BAT!!
THEY'RE BOTH NOCTURNAL.
FWAP
HUNTERS OF THE NIGHT!!
FWAP
FWAP
FWAP
3329


FWAP
FWAP
MY LEFT !!
COME ON!!
UIP
THK
?!
Z
SSH

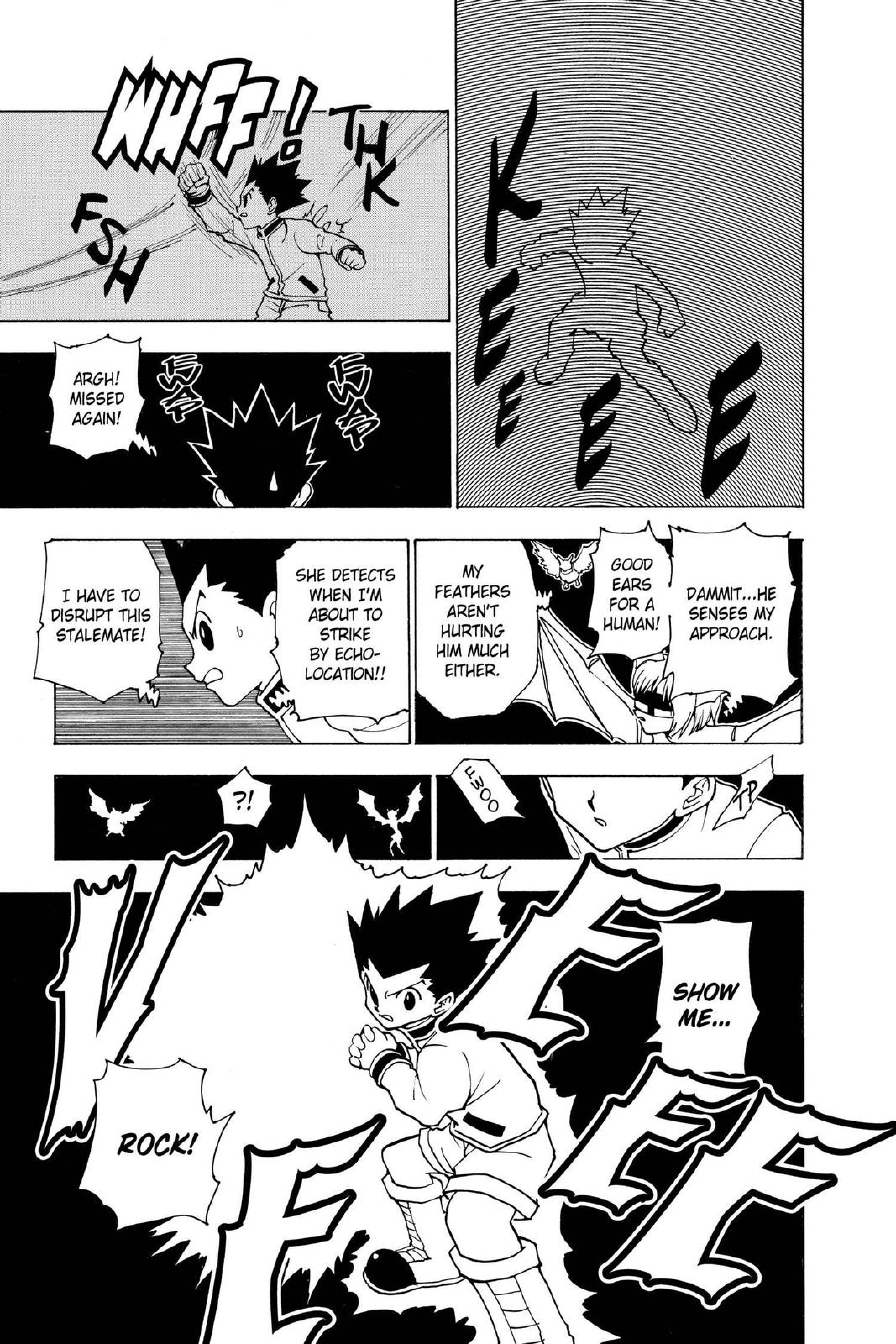

SHNKK
UNH!
AN OWL FEATHER!!
ARGH...THE SOUND OF THE BAT WINGS DROWNS OUT THE OWL'S MOVEMENTS.
FWAP
FWAP
SERRATIONS ON AN OWL'S FLIGHT FEATHERS MUFFLE THE SOUND OF ITS WINGBEATS. THIS ADAPTATION IS BELIEVED TO AID THE OWL IN STEALTHILY APPROACHING ITS PREY, AND HEARING THE PREY'S MOVEMENTS OVER ITS OWN SOUNDS. OWLS HUNT MORE BY SOUND THAN BY SIGHT, SINCE THEY CAN CAPTURE PREY EVEN IN COMPLETE DARKNESS.
THE EARS OF BARN OWLS ARE NOT SYMMETRICAL IN SIZE OR THEIR LOCATION ON THE HEAD. THIS RESULTS IN A TIME LAG IN THE SOUND REACHING EACH EAR, ENABLING THE OWL TO TRIANGULATE THE POSITION OF THE SOUND SOURCE.
HOO HOO! I CAN HEAR HIGHER FREQUENCY SOUNDS THAN OTHER ANIMALS!!
THE LEAVES CRUNCHING BENEATH YOUR FEET!! THE RUSTLING OF YOUR CLOTHES!! THEY ALL TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE!!
3329
FWAP
FWAP
NOW MY RIGHT!!

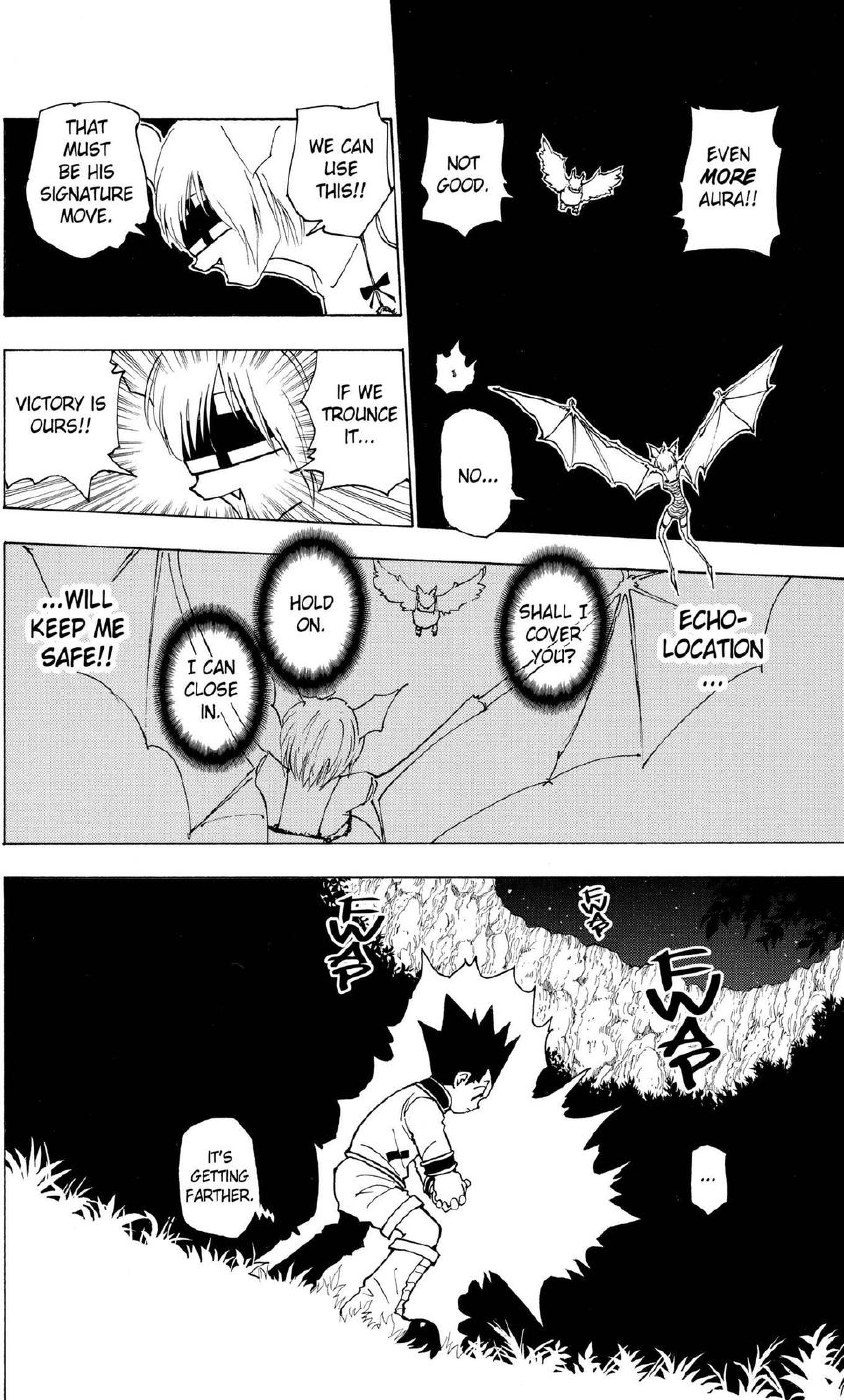

OW!
THK
THK
ZSH!!
GAH!
FWAP
FWAP
URG!
THE OWL DISTRACTS ME RIGHT BEFORE THE BAT ATTACKS!
A SHORT AND LONG-RANGE ONE-TWO PUNCH!!
WAIT...
THAT MEANS ...!
!
VVMMM
VVMMM
LOOKIT ALL THAT AURA.
BUT IT'S NO USE!!

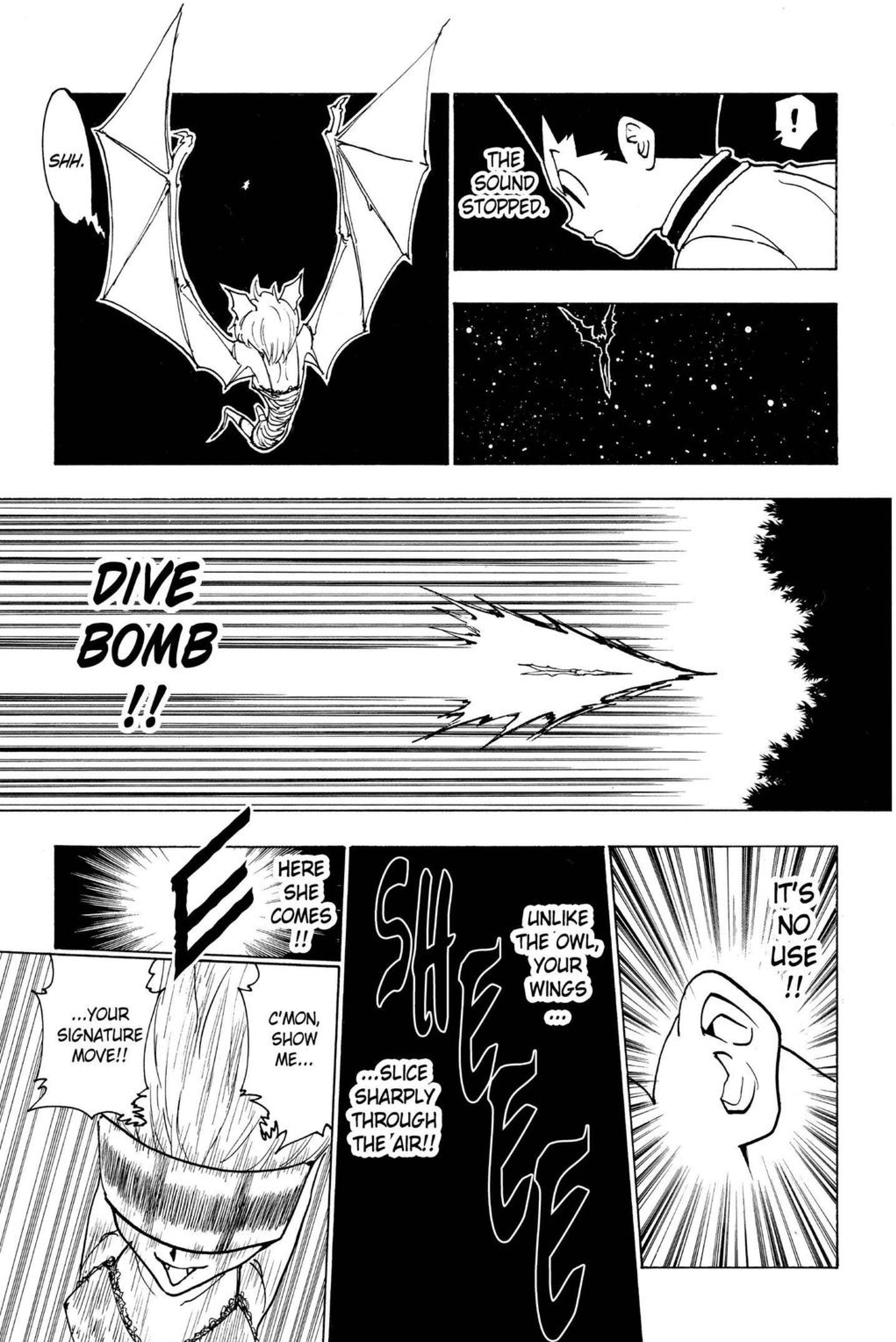

WE RULE THE NIGHT!!
FWAP
FWAP
WSH!!
THINK OF IT ANOTHER WAY!!
IF THE OWL AIDS IN THE ATTACK...
FWAP
JUST FOCUS ON THE BATWINGS FLAPPING!!
RIGHT AFTER THE OWL ATTACKS...
NOW!!
THE BAT WILL STRIKE!!
HEEEE

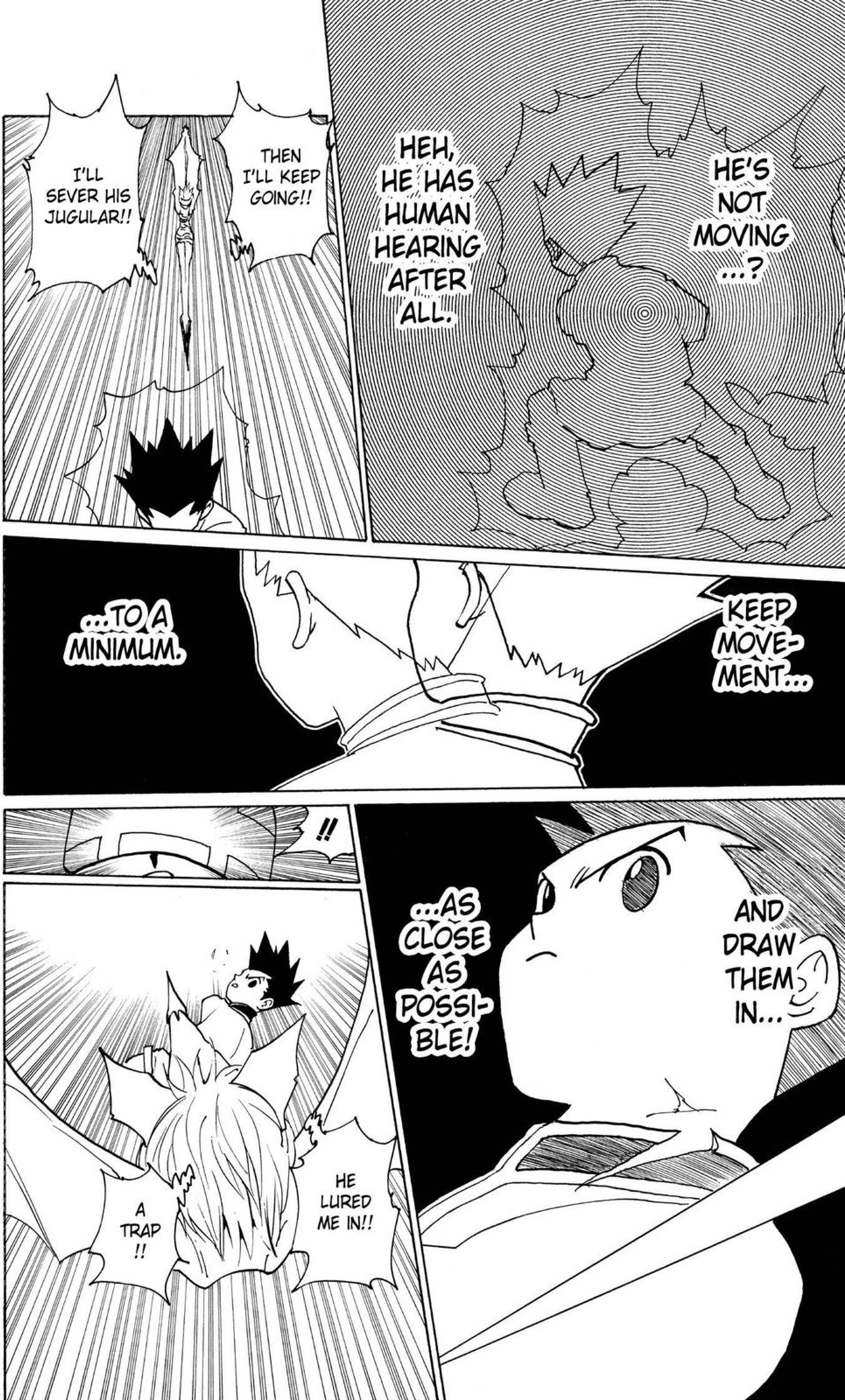

SPOT ON!!
WHFF
FSH
WHA--!
FWAP
I MISSED?! BUT IT WAS PERFECT!!
FWAP
MUST BE ECHOLOCATION!!
ECHOLOCATION ALLOWS BATS TO NAVIGATE AND HUNT IN THE DARK. A BAT EMITS A SERIES OF HIGH-PITCHED CLICKS ("ULTRASOUND") THAT BOUNCE OFF OBJECTS IN ITS ENVIRONMENT. ECHOLOCATION WORKS BY MEASURING THE TIME DELAY BETWEEN THE EMITTED SOUND AND THE ECHO THAT BOUNCES OFF OBJECTS TO LOCALIZE OBSTACLES AND PREY.
BATS USE ECHOLOCATION TO ZERO IN ON PREY AND AVOID COLLISIONS WITH OBSTACLES. THE LIMITS OF ECHOLOCATION ARE NOT YET COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD. THE FISHERMAN BAT IS THOUGHT TO BE ABLE TO HEAR AN ECHO EVEN WHEN IT IS ONLY 1/1,000,000TH AS LOUD AS THE ORIGINAL CLICK.

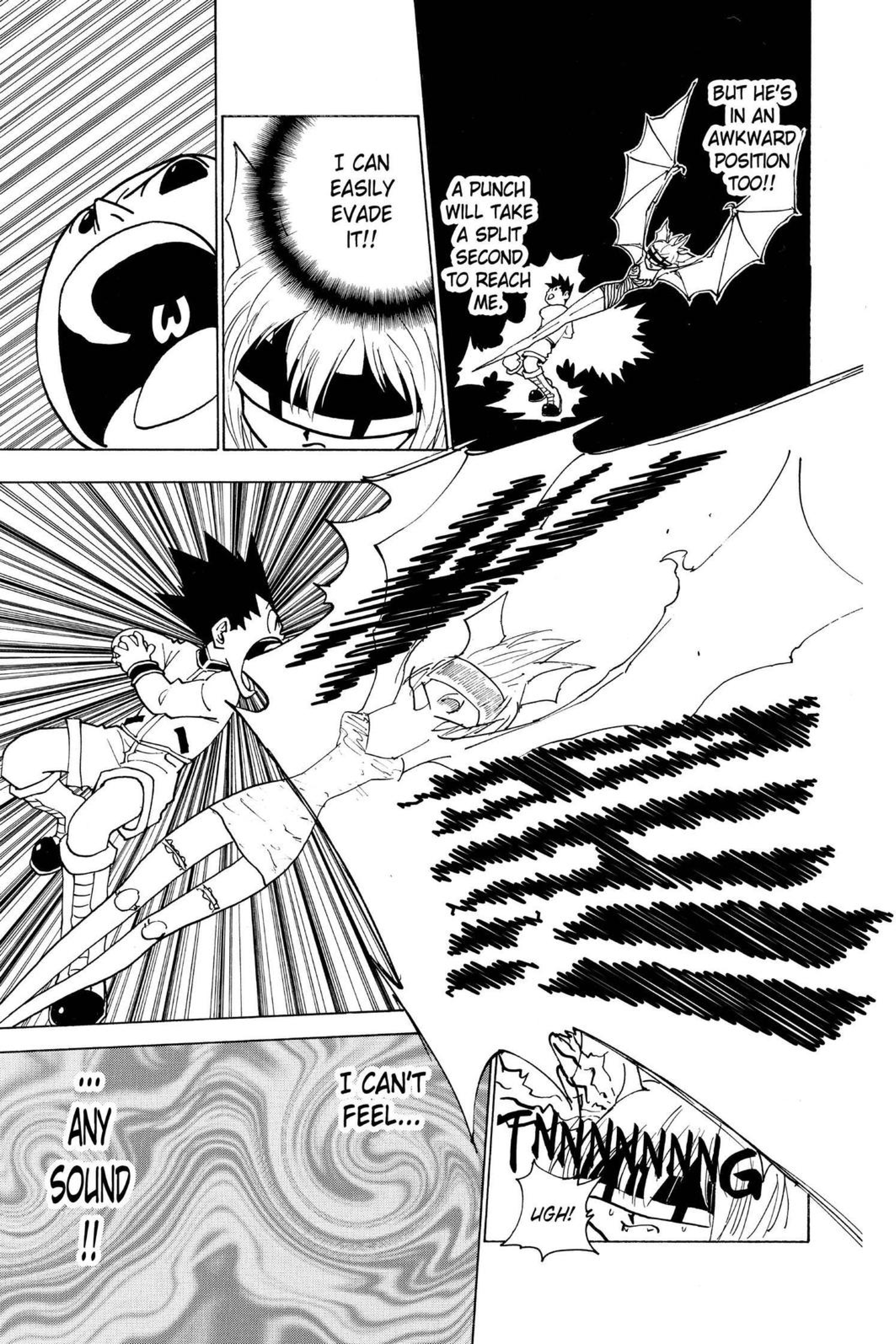
*COURTESY OF *HUNTING BEHAVIOR OF ANIMALS* BY TADA'AKI IMAIZUMI

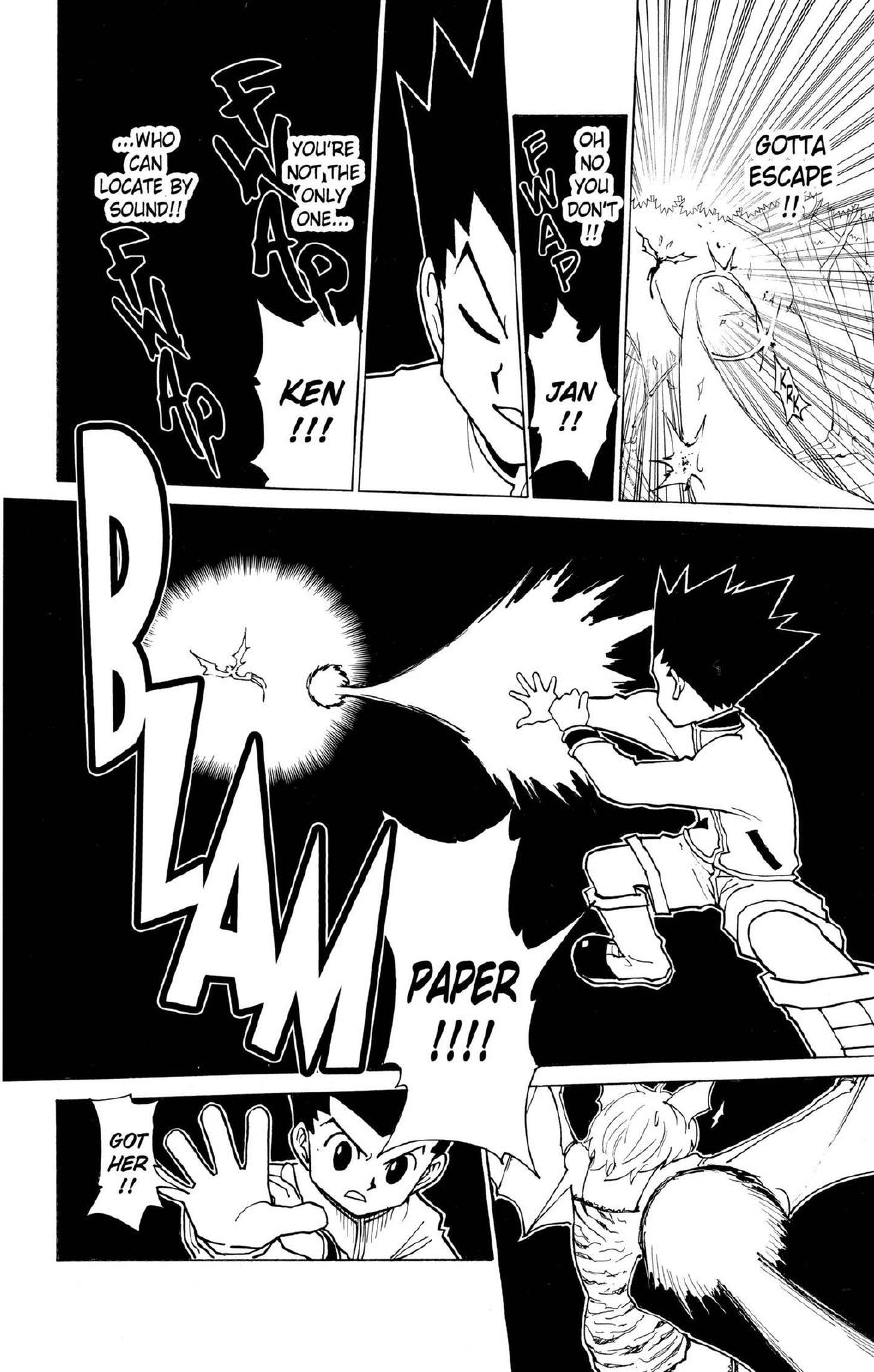

KEEEEE
WHFF!
THK
FSH
FWAP
FWAP
ARGH! MISSED AGAIN!
DAMMIT...HE SENSES MY APPROACH.
GOOD EARS FOR A HUMAN!
MY FEATHERS AREN'T HURTING HIM MUCH EITHER.
SHE DETECTS WHEN I'M ABOUT TO STRIKE BY ECHOLOCATION!!
I HAVE TO DISRUPT THIS STALEMATE!
TP
F3OO
?!
SHOW ME...
ROCK!
VFFFF

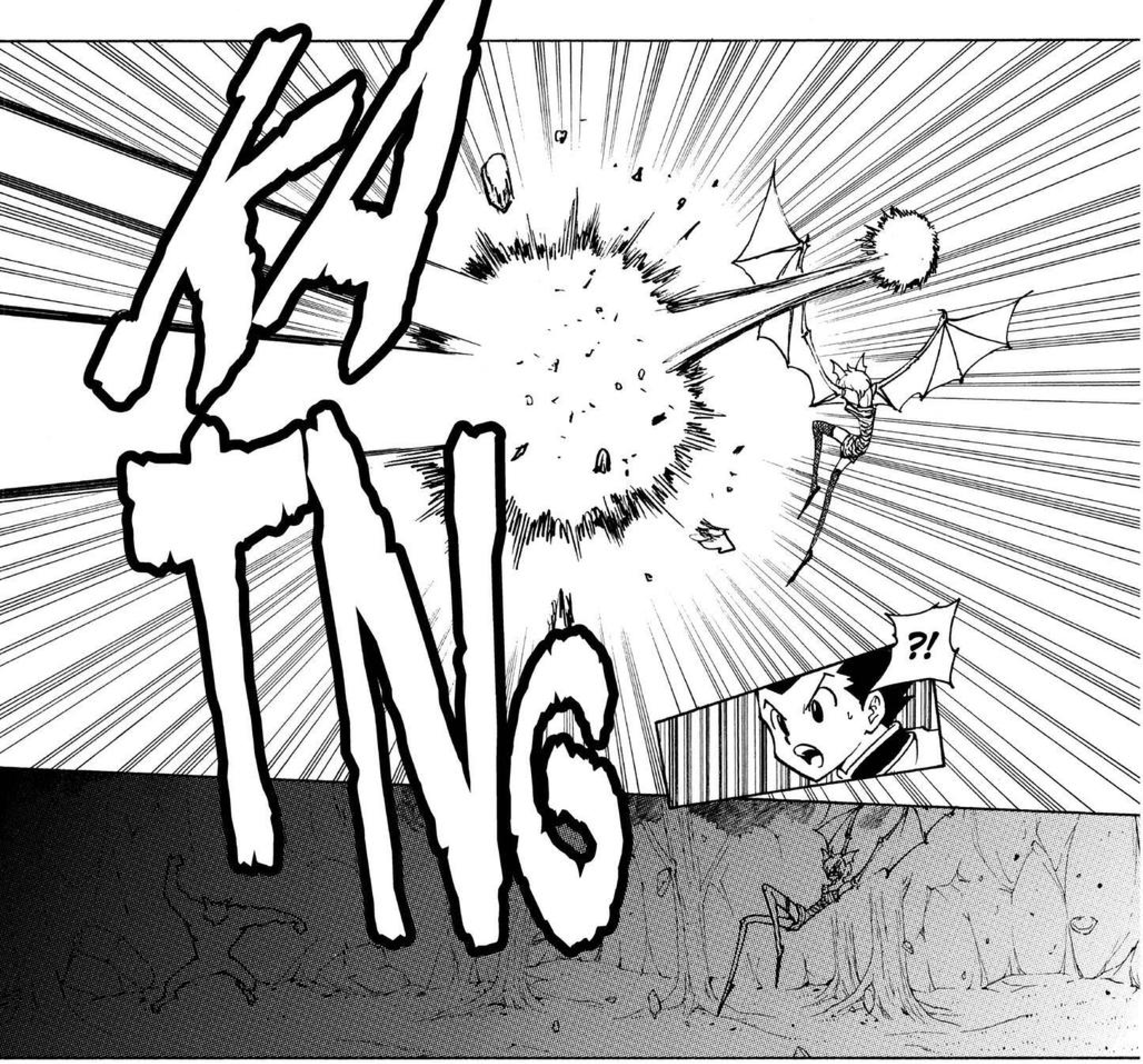

EVEN *MORE* AURA!!
NOT GOOD.
WE CAN USE THIS!!
THAT MUST BE HIS SIGNATURE MOVE.
NO...
IF WE TROUNCE IT...
VICTORY IS OURS!!
ECHO-LOCATION...
SHALL I COVER YOU?
HOLD ON.
I CAN CLOSE IN.
...WILL KEEP ME SAFE!!
FWAP
FWAP
FWAP
...
IT'S GETTING FARTHER.

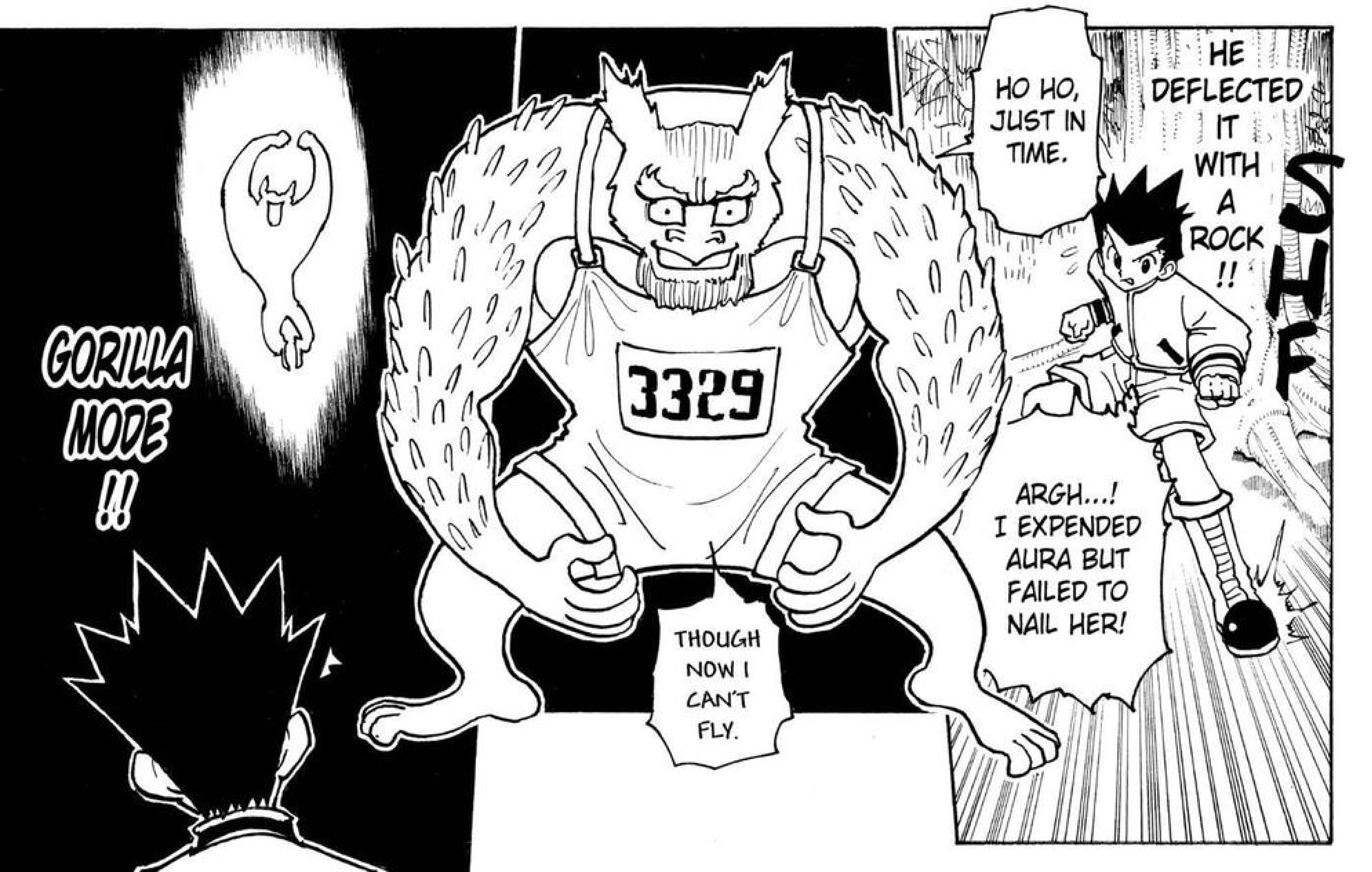

!
THE SOUND STOPPED.
SHH.
DIVE BOMB!!
IT'S NO USE!!
UNLIKE THE OWL, YOUR WINGS...
...SLICE SHARPLY THROUGH THE AIR!!
SHEEEE
HERE SHE COMES!!
C'MON, SHOW ME...
...YOUR SIGNATURE MOVE!!

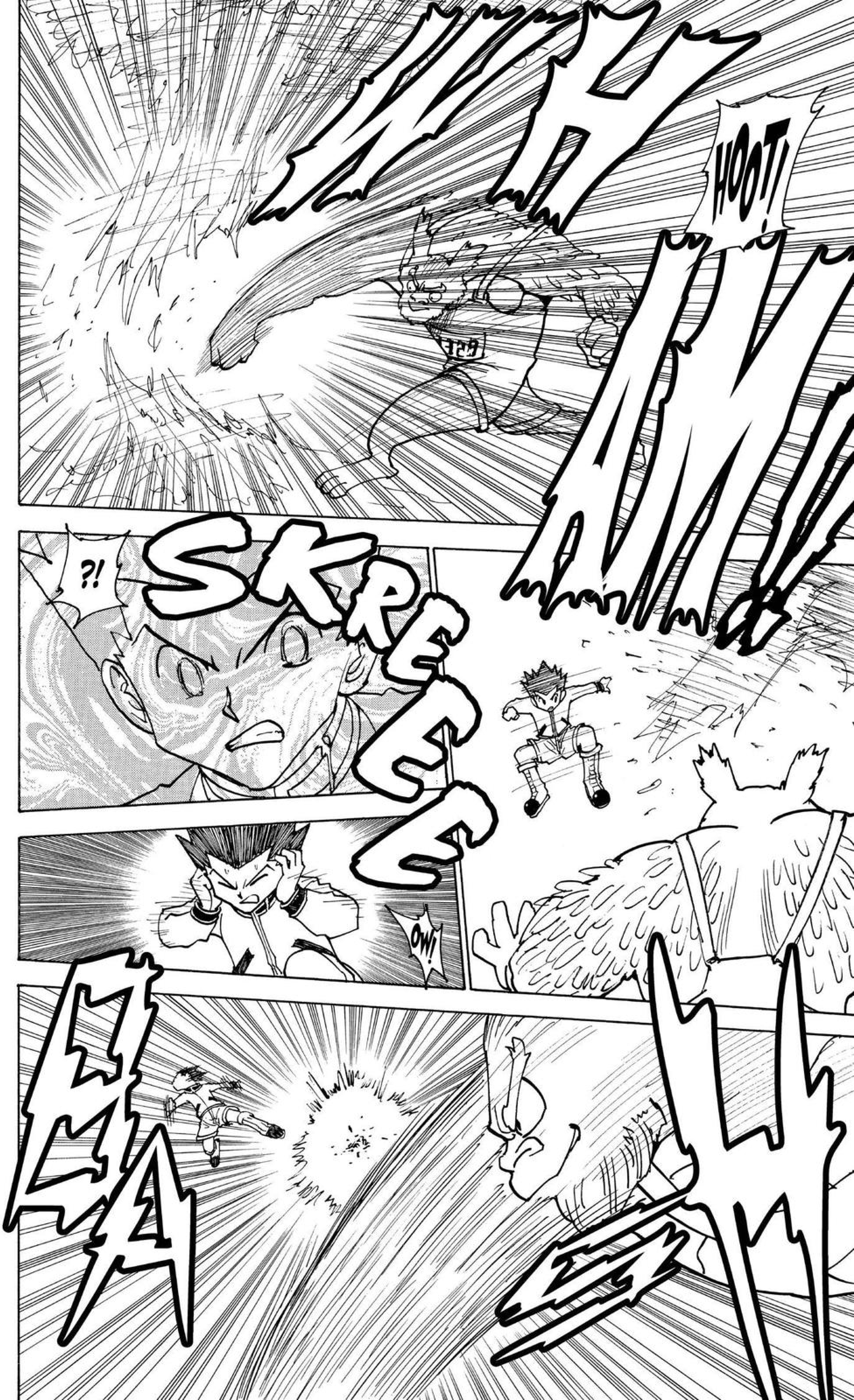

HE'S NOT MOVING ...?
HEH, HE HAS HUMAN HEARING AFTER ALL.
THEN I'LL KEEP GOING!!
I'LL SEVER HIS JUGULAR!!
KEEP MOVEMENT...
...TO A MINIMUM.
AND DRAW THEM IN...
...AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE!
!!
HE LURED ME IN!!
A TRAP !!

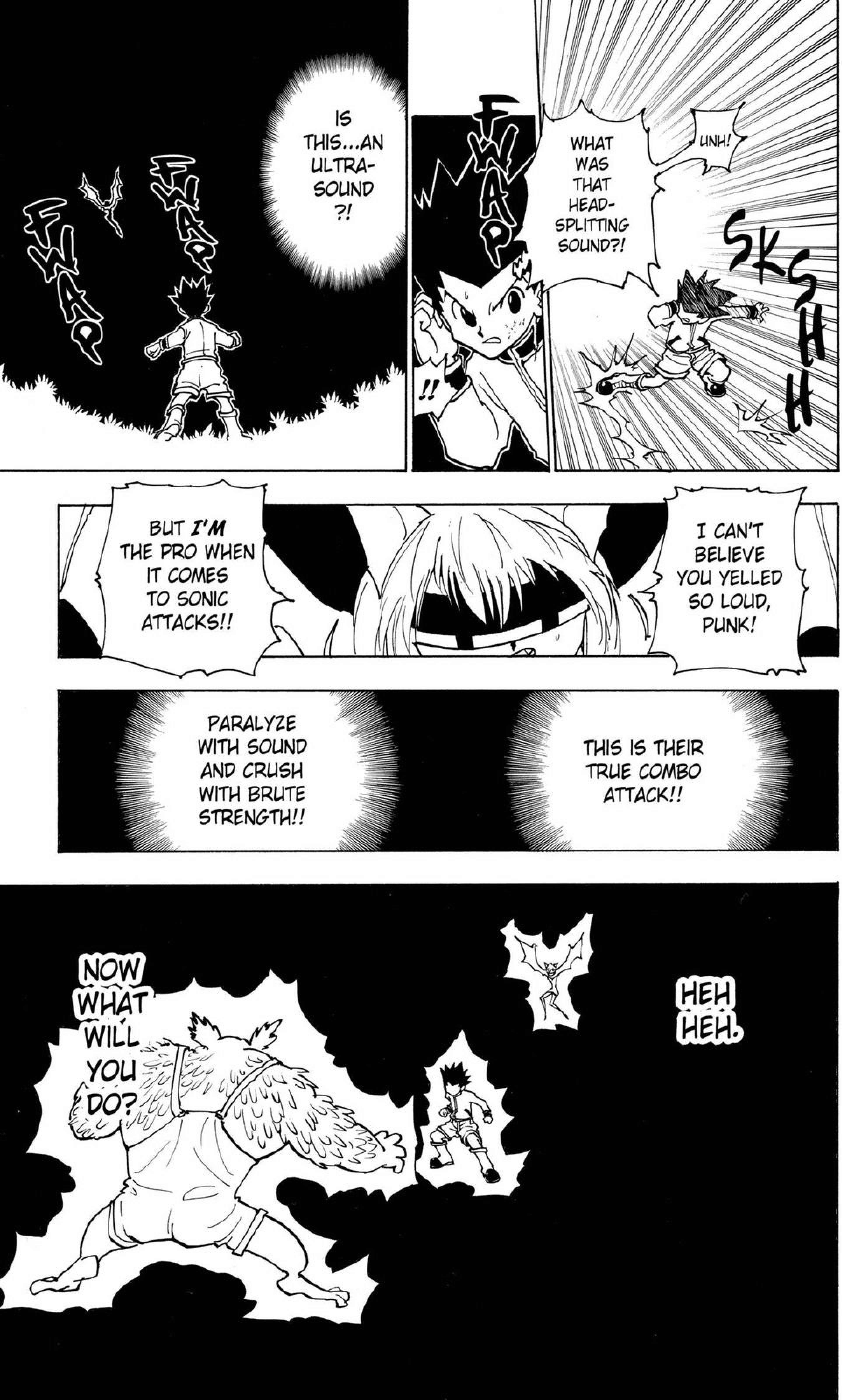

BUT HE'S IN AN AWKWARD POSITION TOO!!
A PUNCH WILL TAKE A SPLIT SECOND TO REACH ME.
I CAN EASILY EVADE IT!!
TNNNNNNNG
UGH!
I CAN'T FEEL...
... ANY SOUND !!

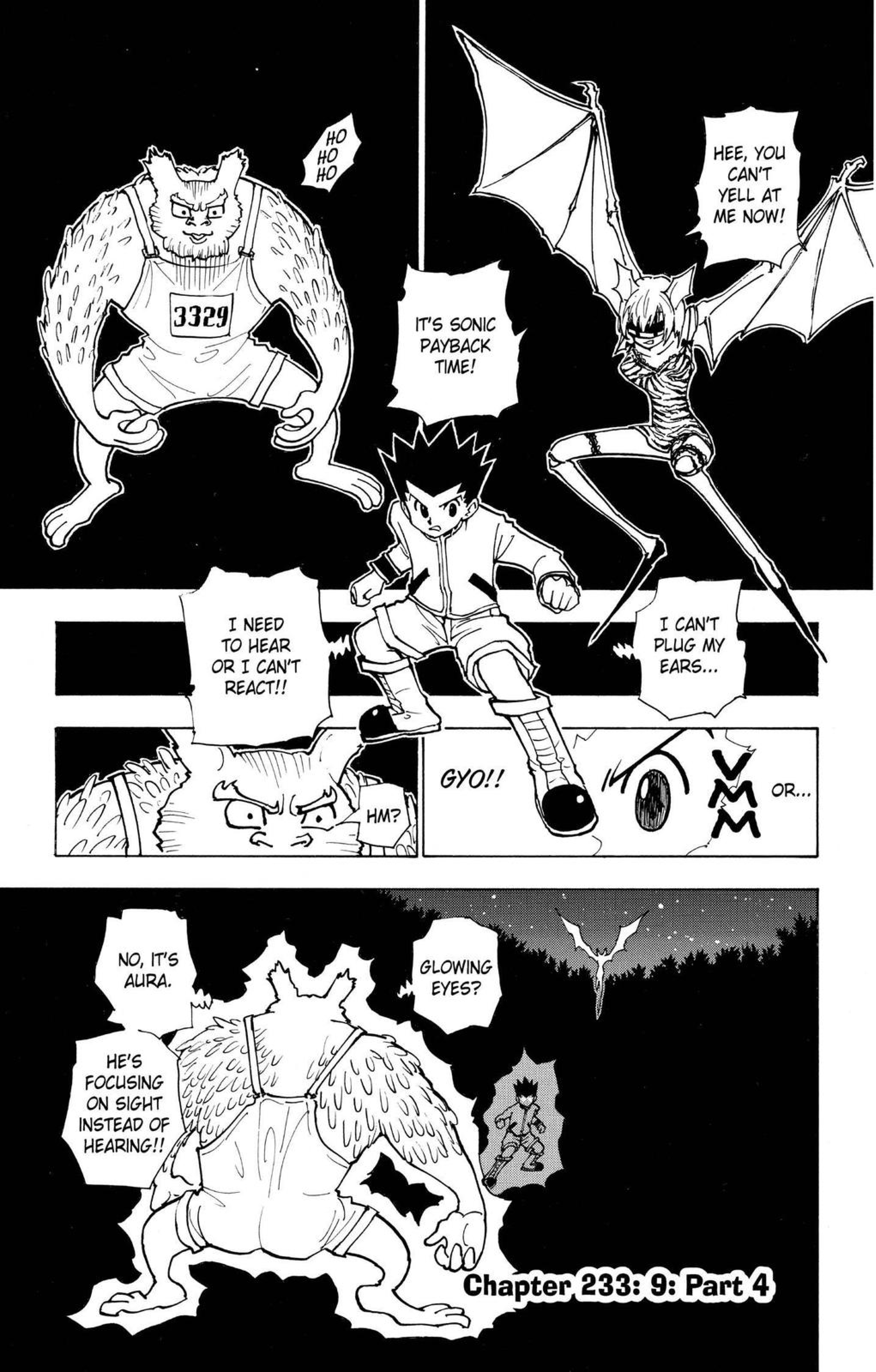

GOTTA ESCAPE!!
KRK
OH NO YOU DON'T!!
FWAP
JAN!!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE...
FWAP
KEN!!!
...WHO CAN LOCATE BY SOUND!!
FWAP
BLAM
PAPER!!!!
GOT HER!!


KA TING
?!

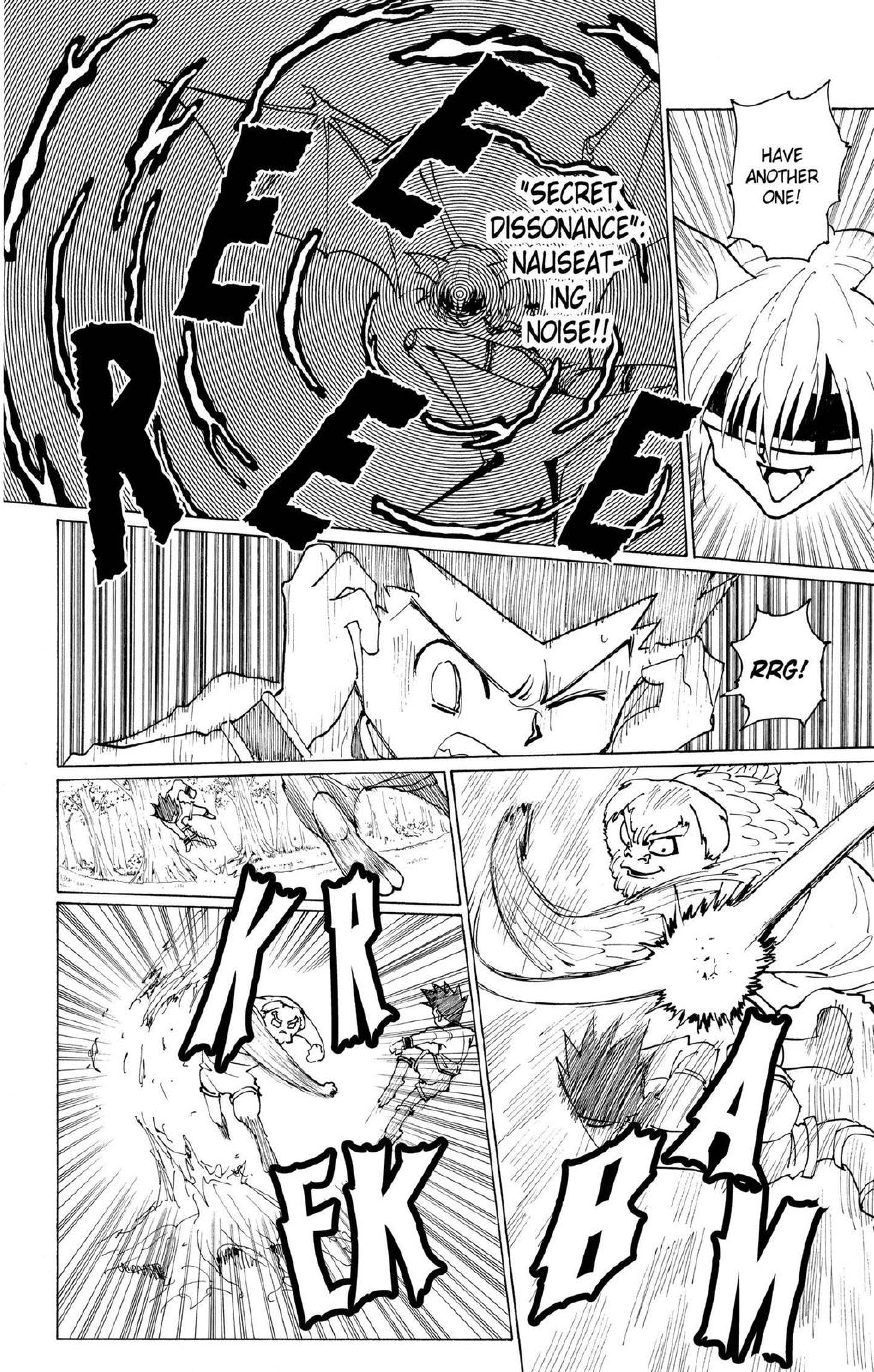

HE DEFLECTED IT WITH A ROCK !!
HO HO, JUST IN TIME.
SHF
ARGH...! I EXPENDED AURA BUT FAILED TO NAIL HER!
3329
THOUGH NOW I CAN'T FLY.
GORILLA MODE !!

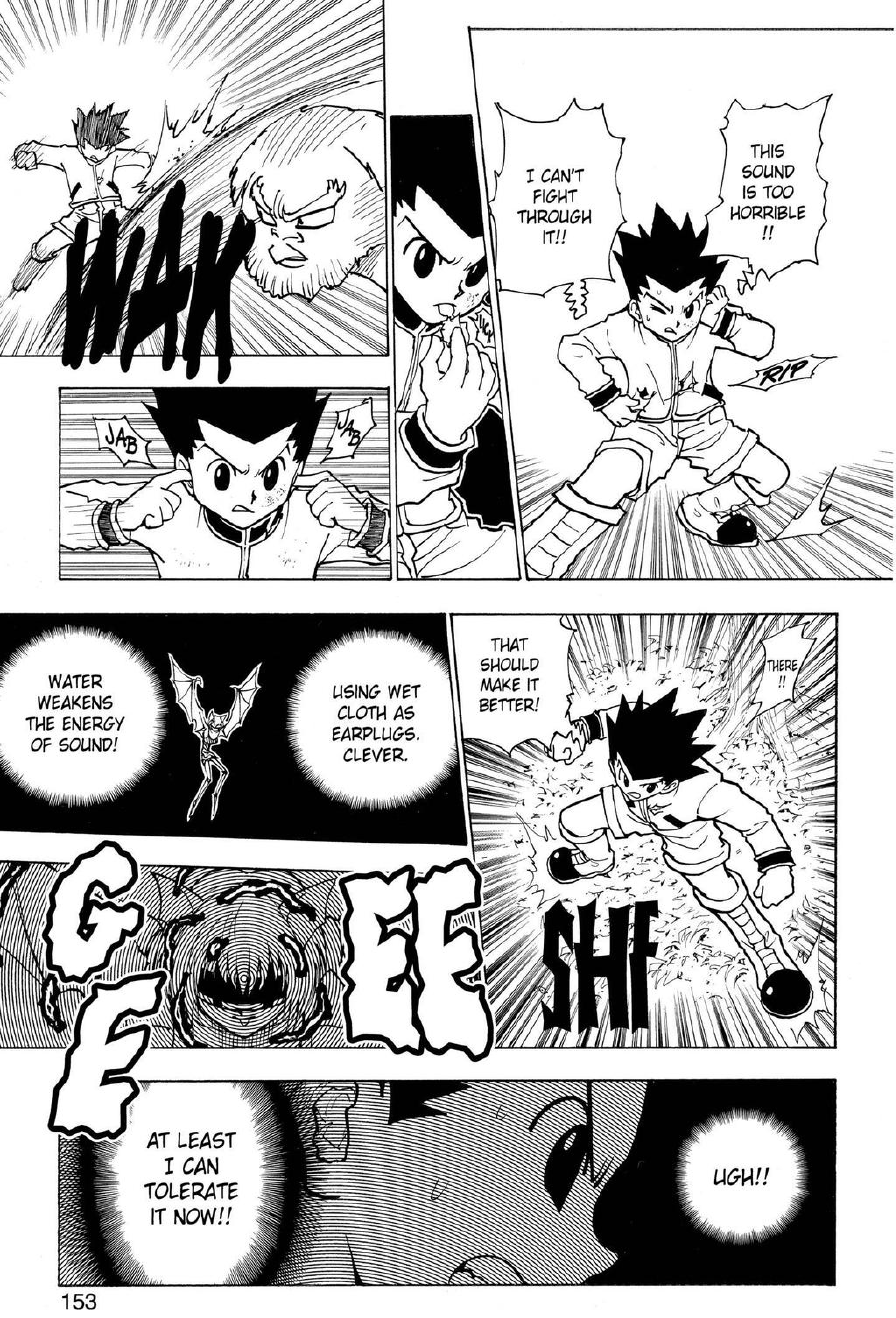

WHAM!!
HOOT!
SKREEEE
?!
OW!

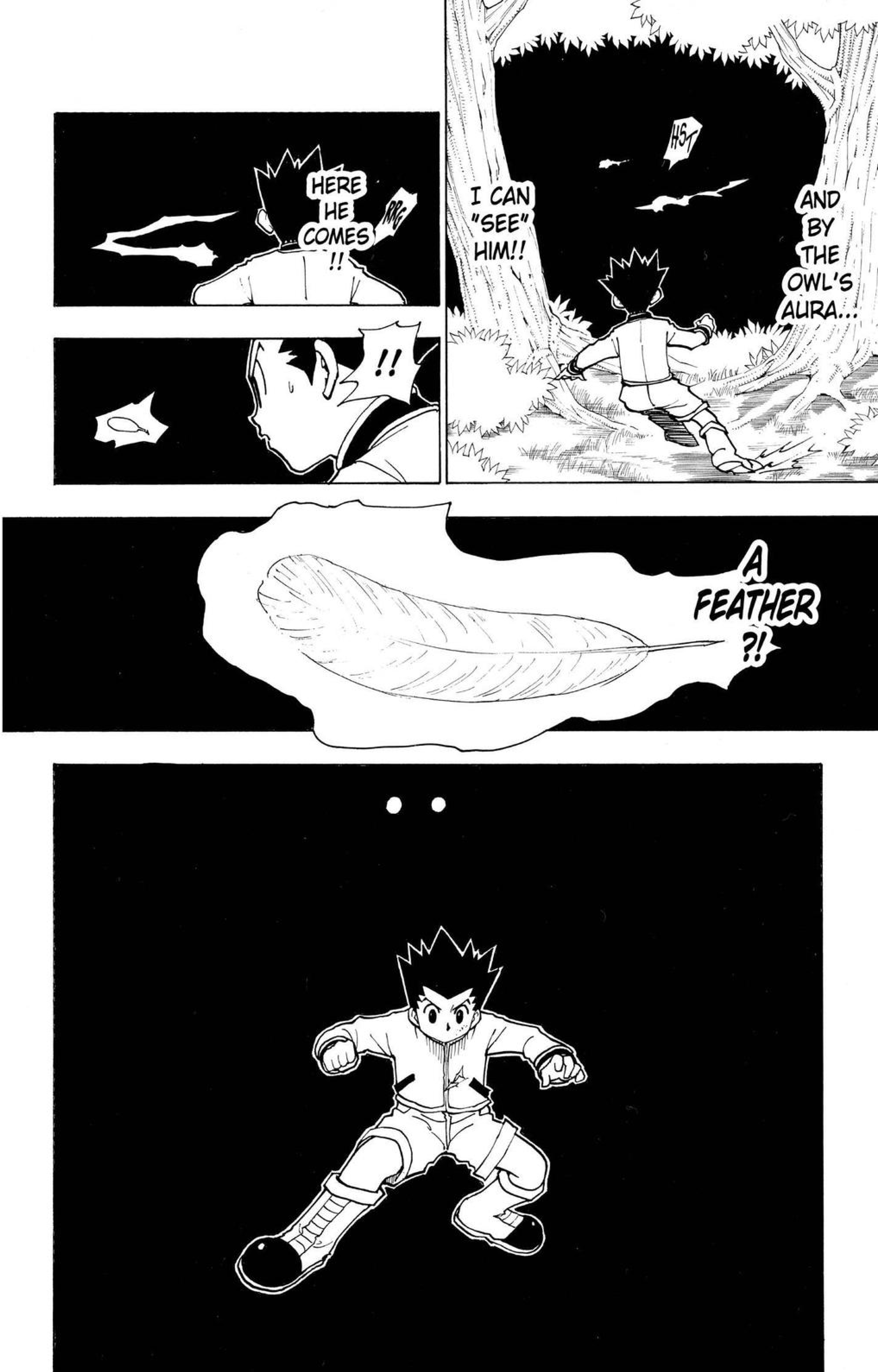

UNH!
SKSHH
WHAT WAS THAT HEAD-SPLITTING SOUND?!
FWAP
!!
IS THIS...AN ULTRASOUND?!
FWAP
FWAP
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU YELLED SO LOUD, PUNK!
BUT ***I'M*** THE PRO WHEN IT COMES TO SONIC ATTACKS!!
THIS IS THEIR TRUE COMBO ATTACK!!
PARALYZE WITH SOUND AND CRUSH WITH BRUTE STRENGTH!!
HEH HEH.
NOW WHAT WILL YOU DO?

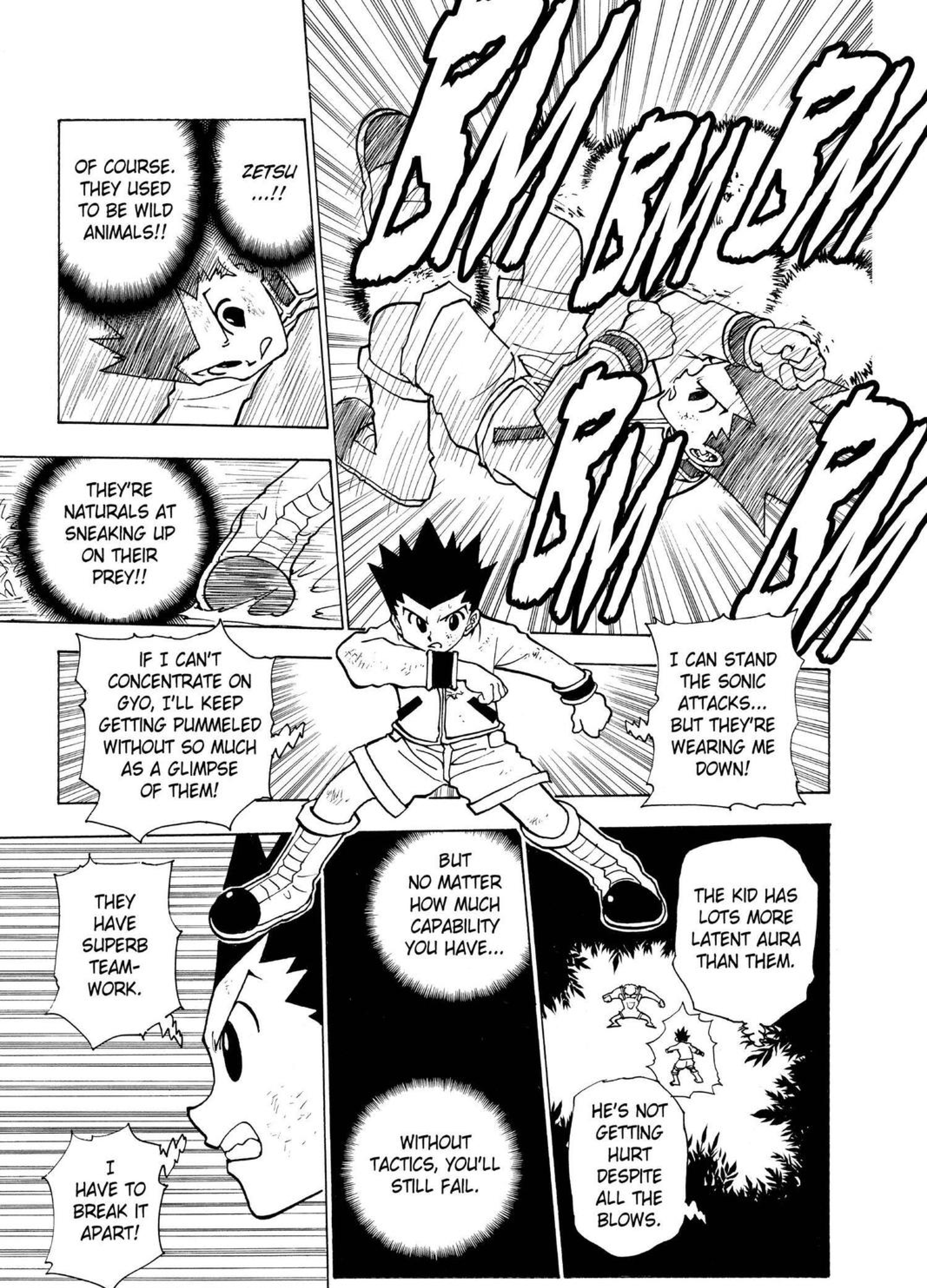

HEE, YOU CAN'T YELL AT ME NOW!
IT'S SONIC PAYBACK TIME!
HO HO HO
I CAN'T PLUG MY EARS...
I NEED TO HEAR OR I CAN'T REACT!!
OR...
VMM
GYO!!
HM?
GLOWING EYES?
NO, IT'S AURA.
HE'S FOCUSING ON SIGHT INSTEAD OF HEARING!!
3329

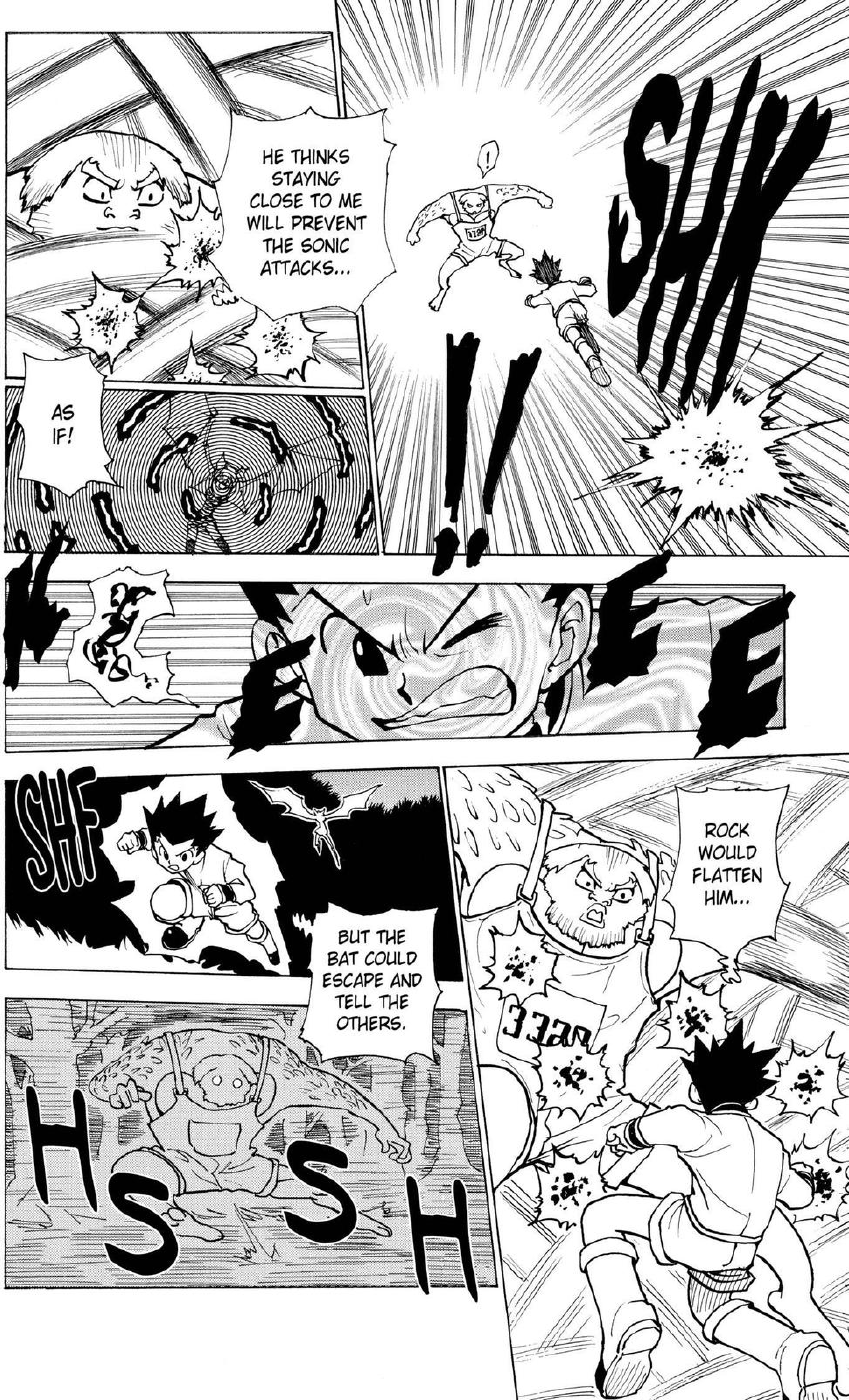
Chapter 233: 9: Part 4

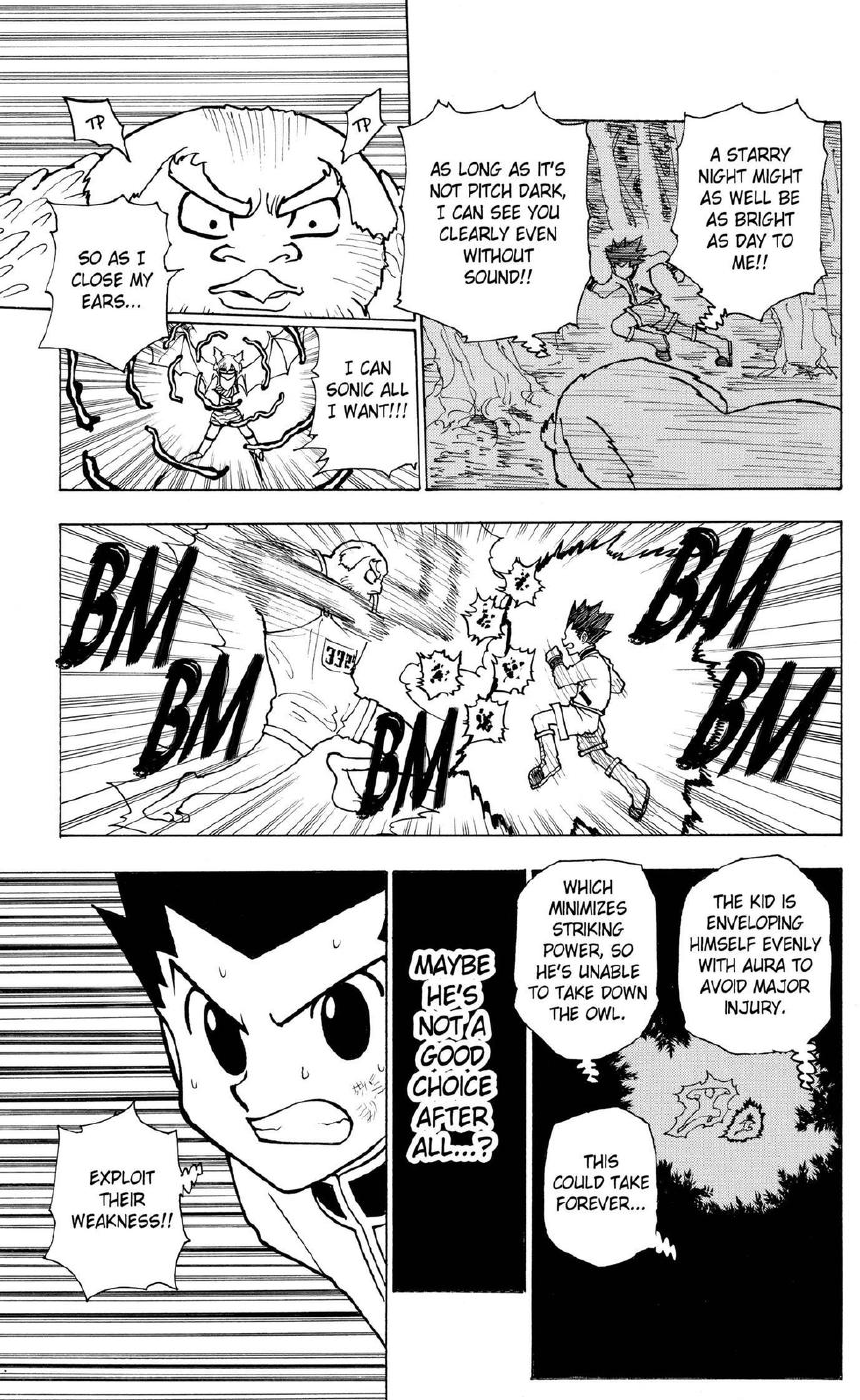

HAVE ANOTHER ONE!
"SECRET DISSONANCE": NAUSEATING NOISE!!
REEEE
RRG!
BAM
KREK

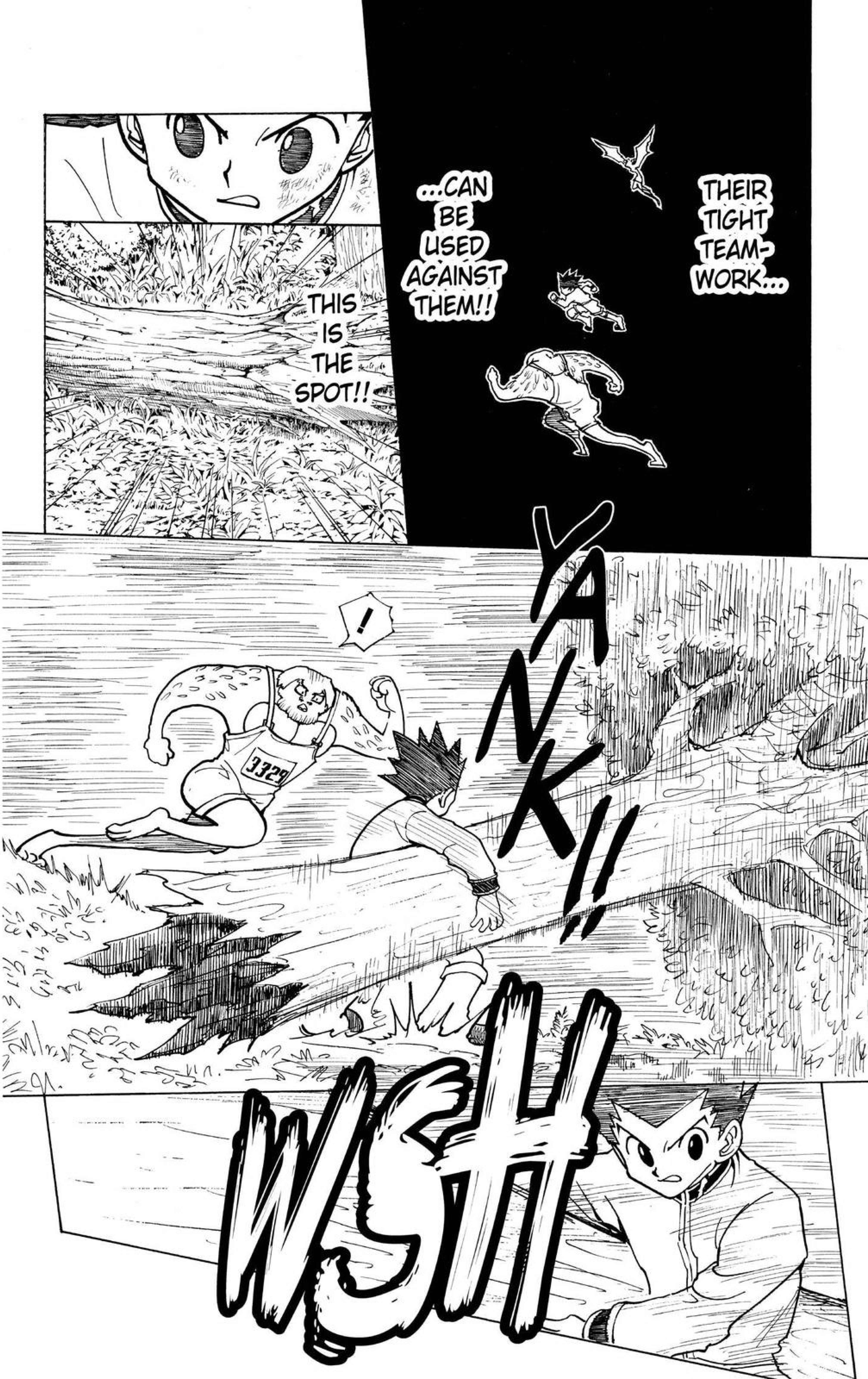

THIS SOUND IS TOO HORRIBLE!!
I CAN'T FIGHT THROUGH IT!!
RIP
LICK
WAK
JAB
JAB
THERE!!
THAT SHOULD MAKE IT BETTER!
SHF
USING WET CLOTH AS EARPLUGS. CLEVER.
WATER WEAKENS THE ENERGY OF SOUND!
GEEE
UGH!!
AT LEAST I CAN TOLERATE IT NOW!!

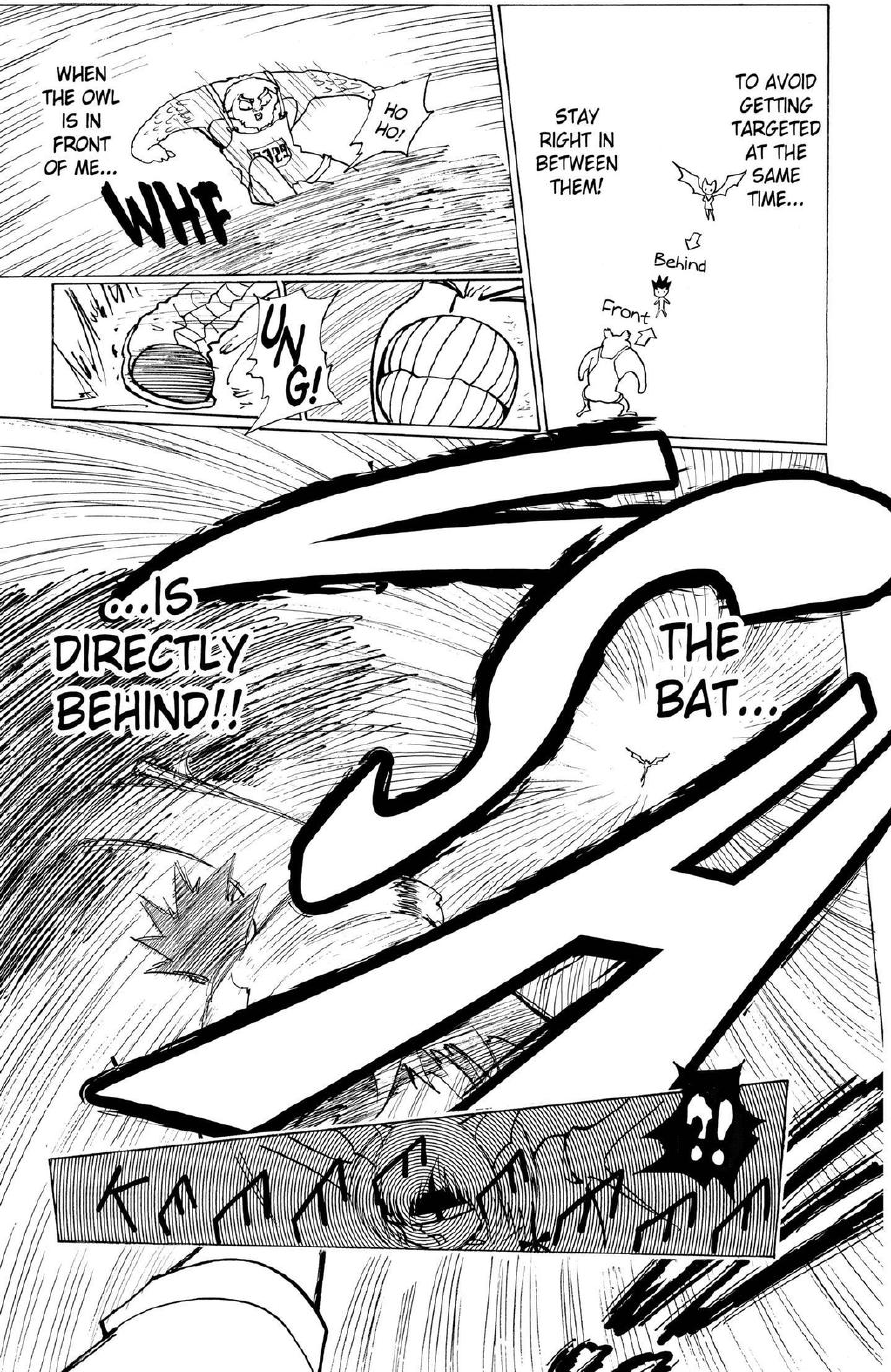

HST
I CAN "SEE" HIM!!
AND BY THE OWL'S AURA...
RRG
HERE HE COMES !!
!!
A FEATHER ?!

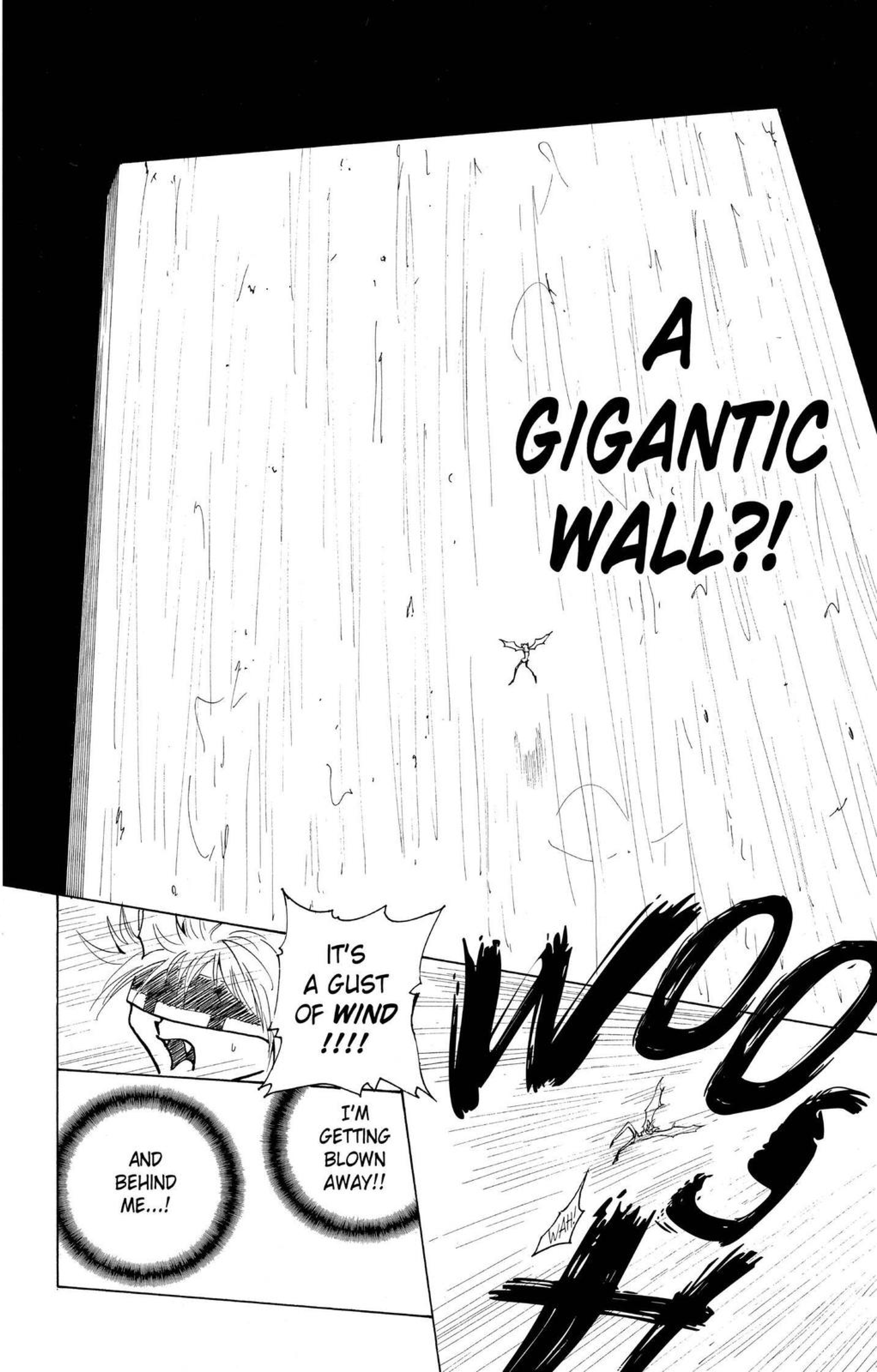

BAM BAM BAM
BAM BAM
ZETSU ...!!
OF COURSE. THEY USED TO BE WILD ANIMALS!!
THEY'RE NATURALS AT SNEAKING UP ON THEIR PREY!!
I CAN STAND THE SONIC ATTACKS... BUT THEY'RE WEARING ME DOWN!
IF I CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON GYO, I'LL KEEP GETTING PUMMELED WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A GLIMPSE OF THEM!
THE KID HAS LOTS MORE LATENT AURA THAN THEM.
HE'S NOT GETTING HURT DESPITE ALL THE BLOWS.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH CAPABILITY YOU HAVE...
WITHOUT TACTICS, YOU'LL STILL FAIL.
THEY HAVE SUPERB TEAMWORK.
I HAVE TO BREAK IT APART!

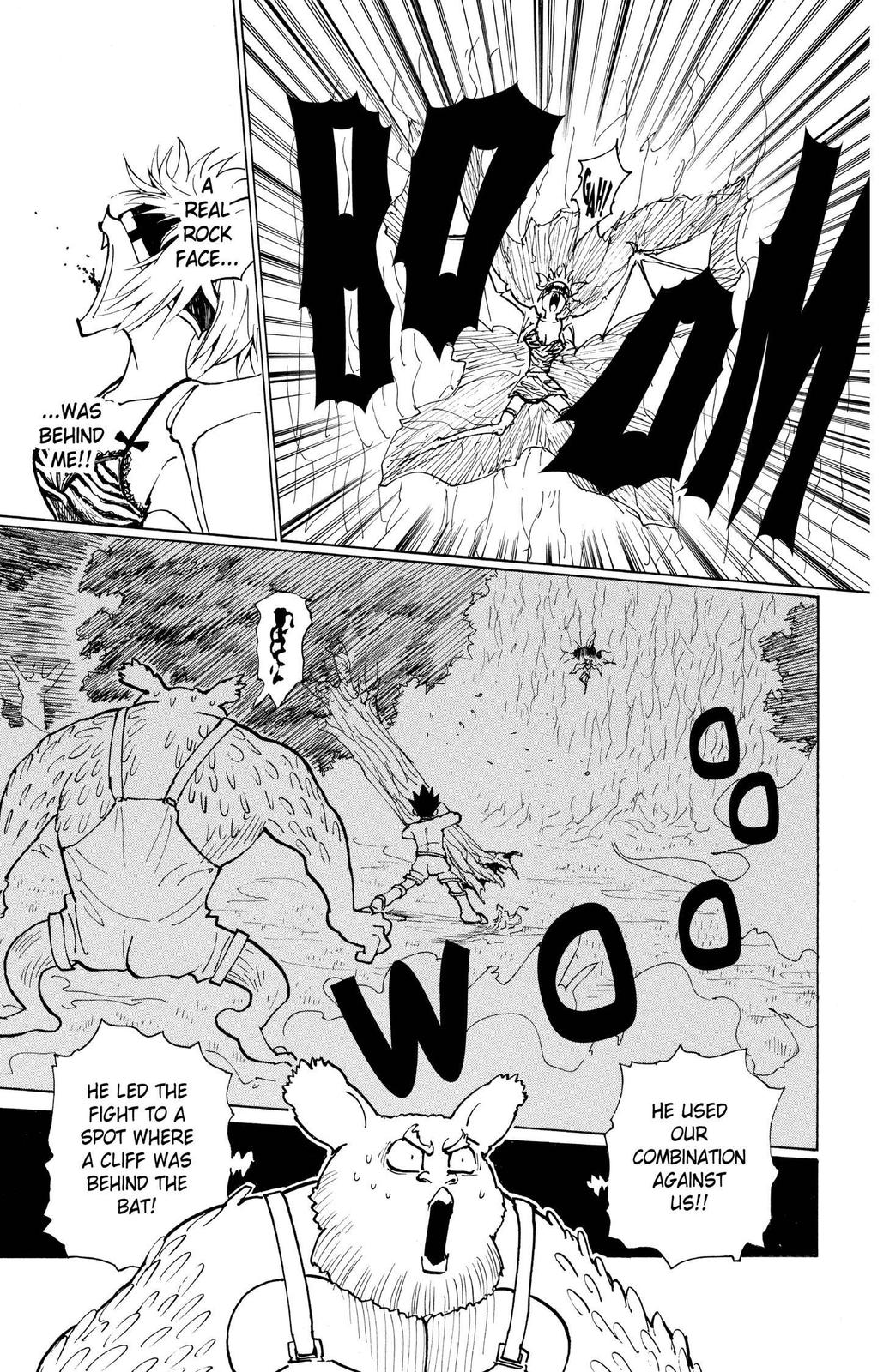

SHK
!
!!
HE THINKS STAYING CLOSE TO ME WILL PREVENT THE SONIC ATTACKS...
AS IF!
KEEEE
ROCK WOULD FLATTEN HIM...
SHF
BUT THE BAT COULD ESCAPE AND TELL THE OTHERS.
HSSH

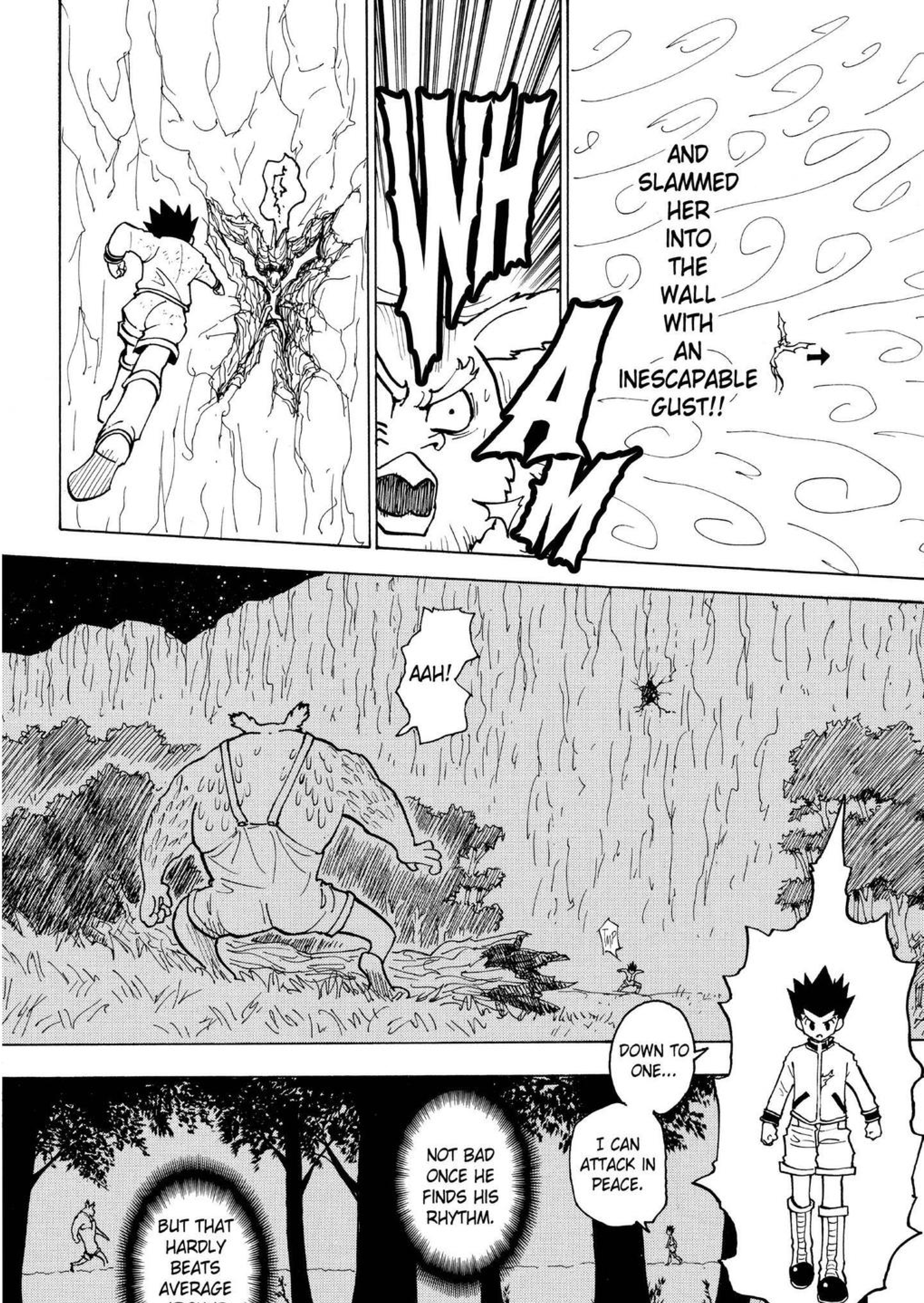

A STARRY NIGHT MIGHT AS WELL BE AS BRIGHT AS DAY TO ME!!
AS LONG AS IT'S NOT PITCH DARK, I CAN SEE YOU CLEARLY EVEN WITHOUT SOUND!!
TP
TP
SO AS I CLOSE MY EARS...
I CAN SONIC ALL I WANT!!!
BM
BM
BM
BM
BM
THE KID IS ENVELOPING HIMSELF EVENLY WITH AURA TO AVOID MAJOR INJURY.
WHICH MINIMIZES STRIKING POWER, SO HE'S UNABLE TO TAKE DOWN THE OWL.
THIS COULD TAKE FOREVER...
MAYBE HE'S NOT A GOOD CHOICE AFTER ALL...?
EXPLOIT THEIR WEAKNESS!!

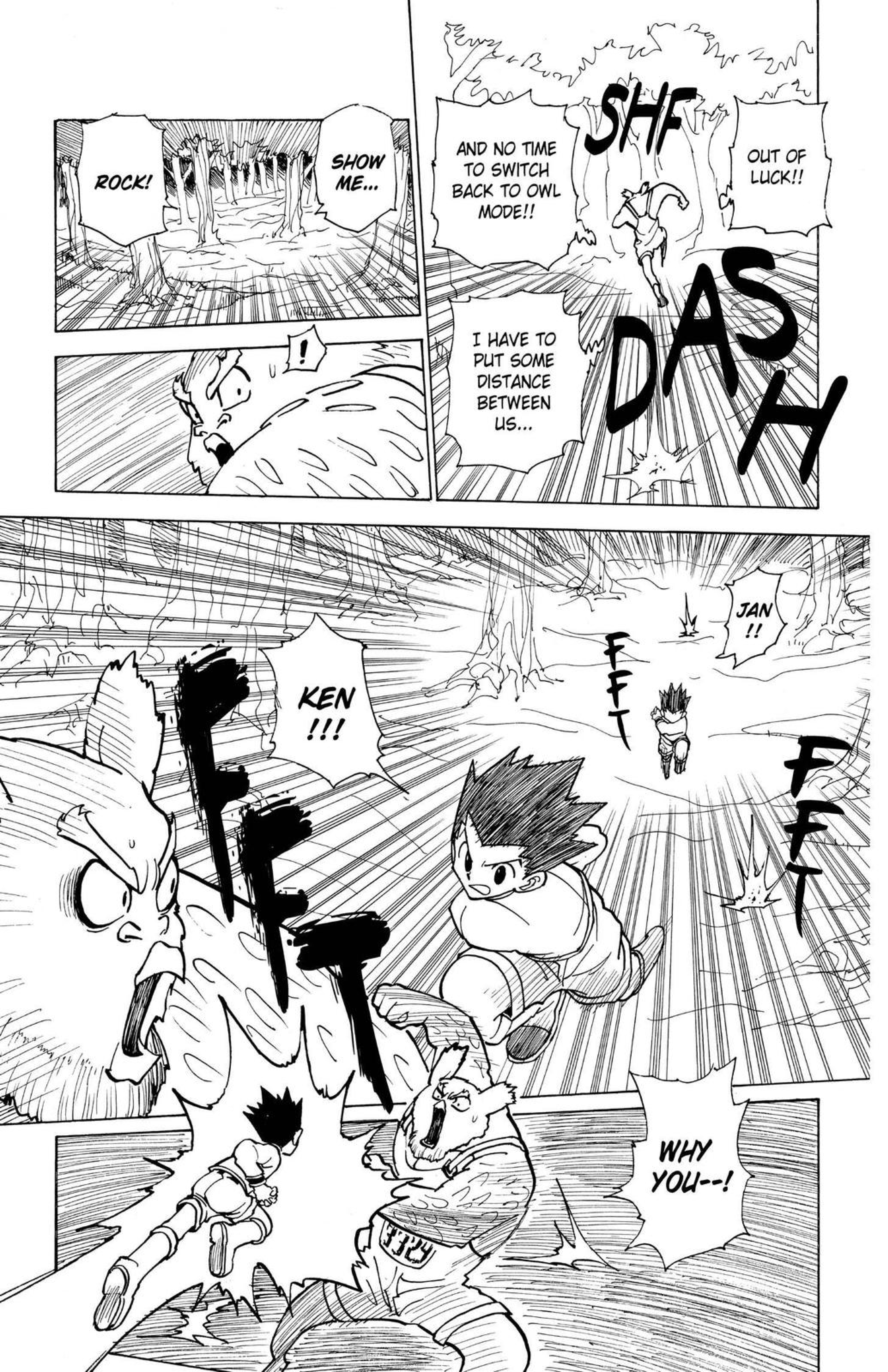

THEIR TIGHT TEAMWORK...
...CAN BE USED AGAINST THEM!!
THIS IS THE SPOT!!
!
3329
YANK!!
WSH

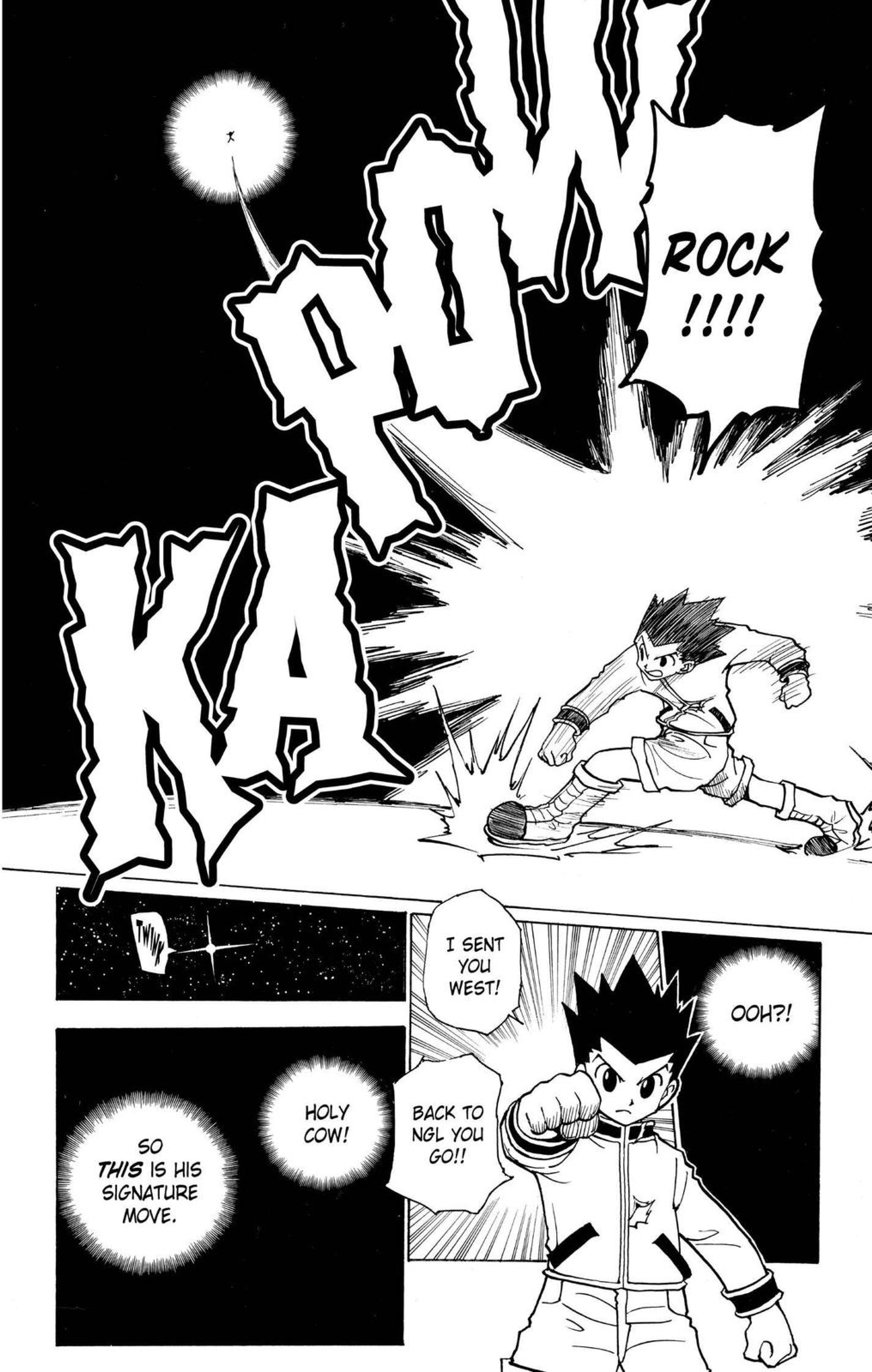

TO AVOID GETTING TARGETED AT THE SAME TIME...
STAY RIGHT IN BETWEEN THEM!
Behind
Front
WHEN THE OWL IS IN FRONT OF ME...
HO HO!
WHF
UNG!
THE BAT...
...IS DIRECTLY BEHIND!!
?!!

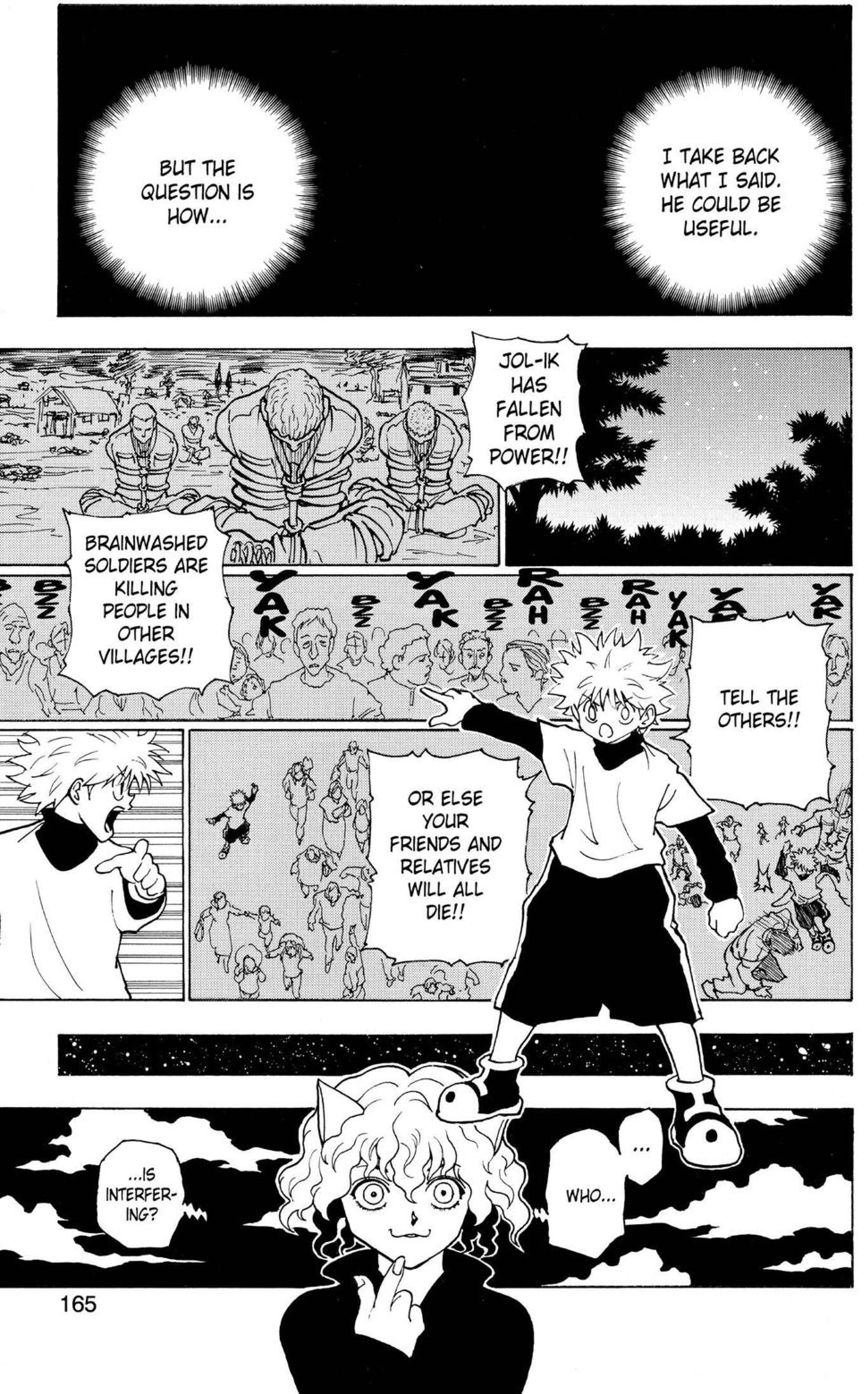

A GIGANTIC WALL?!
WOOSH
IT'S A GUST OF **WIND** !!!!
WAH!
I'M GETTING BLOWN AWAY!!
AND BEHIND ME...!

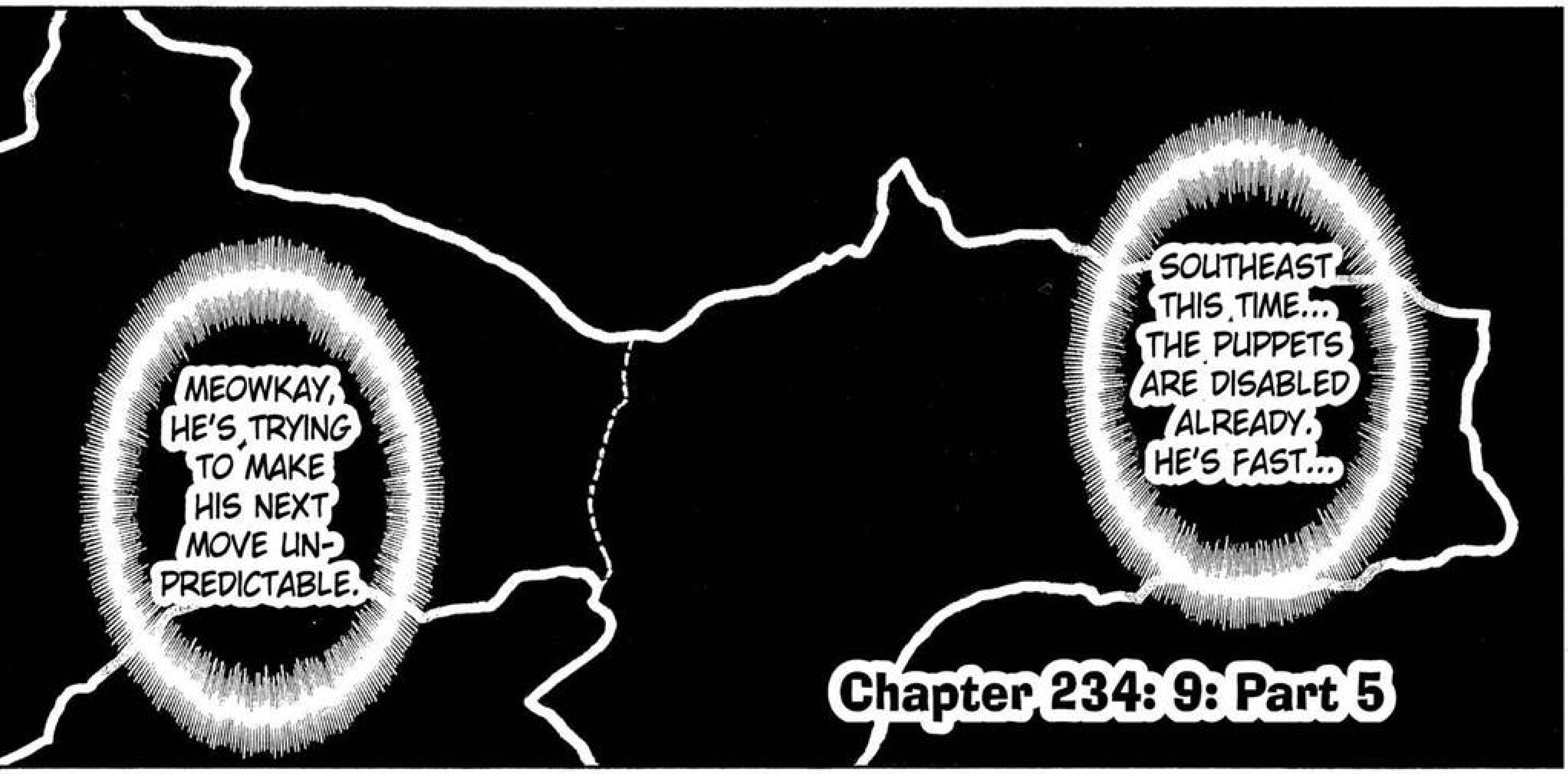

BOOM
GAH!
A REAL ROCK FACE...
...WAS BEHIND ME!!
WOOOOO
HE USED OUR COMBINATION AGAINST US!!
HE LED THE FIGHT TO A SPOT WHERE A CLIFF WAS BEHIND THE BAT!


AND SLAMMED HER INTO THE WALL WITH AN INESCAPABLE GUST!!
WHAM
AAH!
TMP
DOWN TO ONE...
I CAN ATTACK IN PEACE.
NOT BAD ONCE HE FINDS HIS RHYTHM.
BUT THAT HARDLY BEATS AVERAGE AROUND HERE.

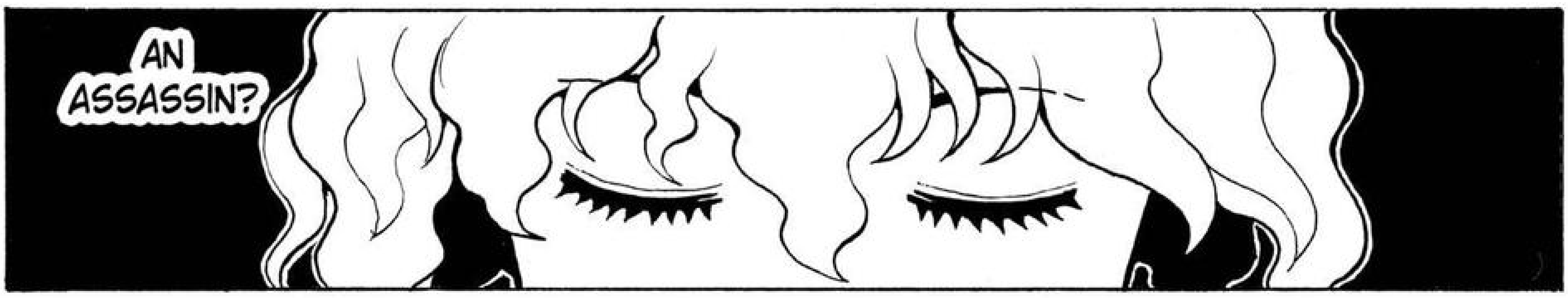

OUT OF LUCK!!
SHF
AND NO TIME TO SWITCH BACK TO OWL MODE!!
I HAVE TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US...
DASH
SHOW ME...
ROCK!
!
JAN !!
FFFT
FFFT
KEN !!!
FFFT
WHY YOU--!

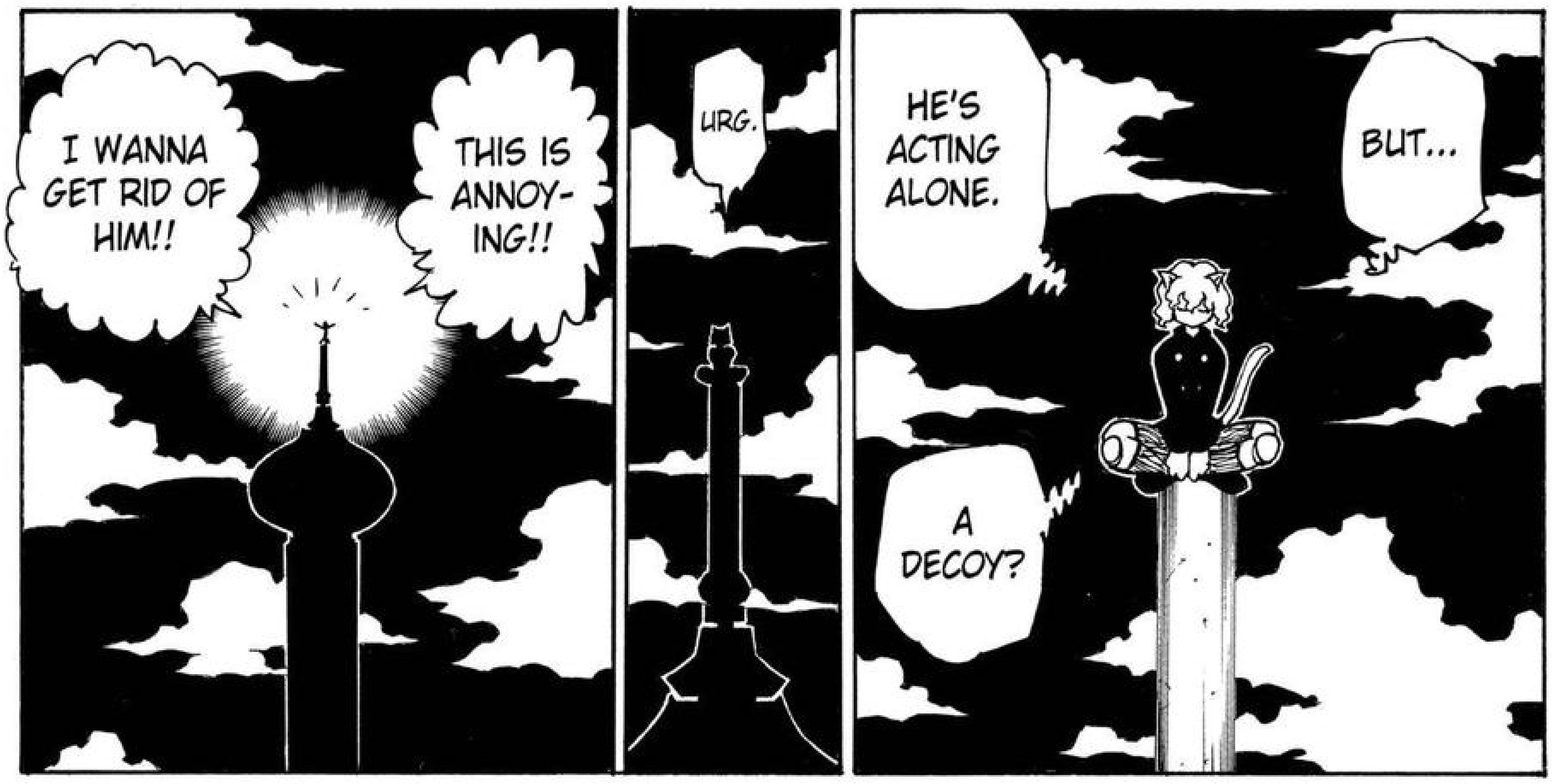

ROCK !!!!
KA
POW
OOH?!
I SENT YOU WEST!
BACK TO NGL YOU GO!!
TWINK
HOLY COW!
SO *THIS* IS HIS SIGNATURE MOVE.

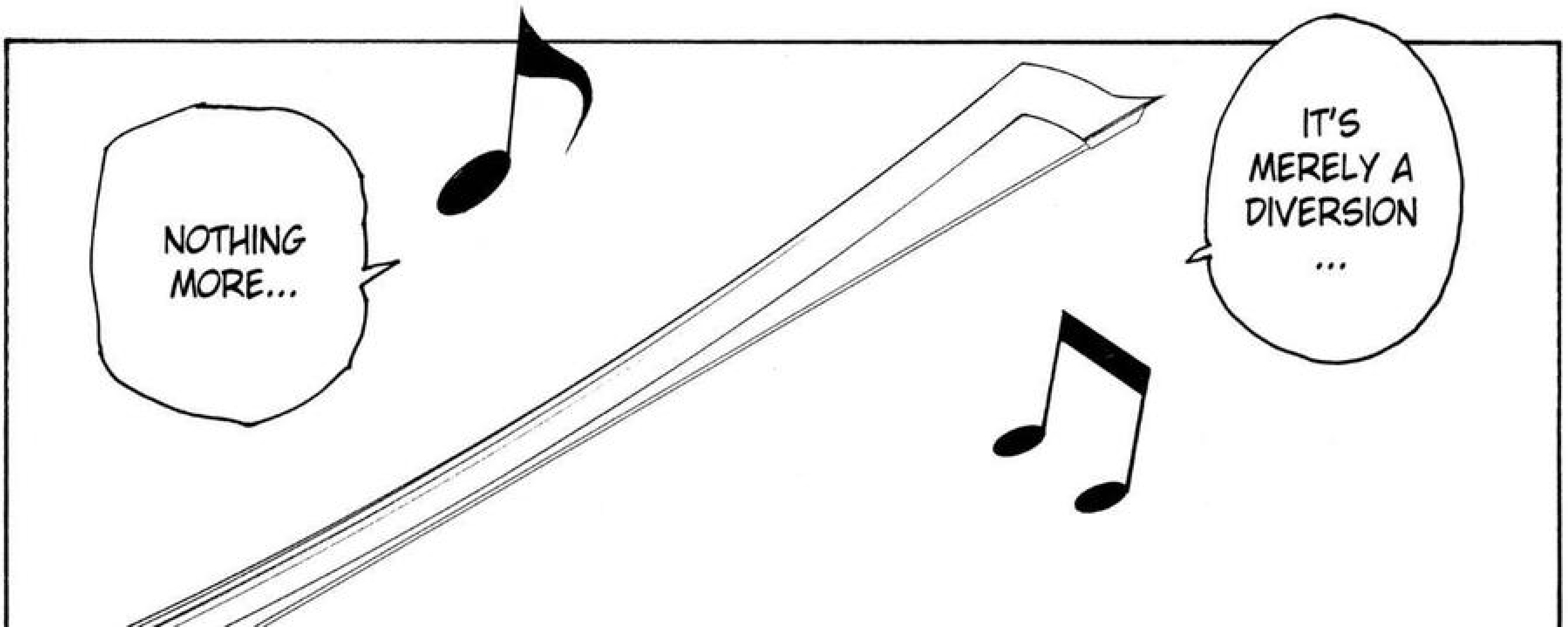

I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID. HE COULD BE USEFUL.
BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW...
JOL-IK HAS FALLEN FROM POWER!!
BRAINWASHED SOLDIERS ARE KILLING PEOPLE IN OTHER VILLAGES!!
YAK YAK RAH BZZ RAH BZZ YAK BZZ YAK BZZ YAK BZZ
TELL THE OTHERS!!
OR ELSE YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WILL ALL DIE!!
...
WHO...
...IS INTERFERING?

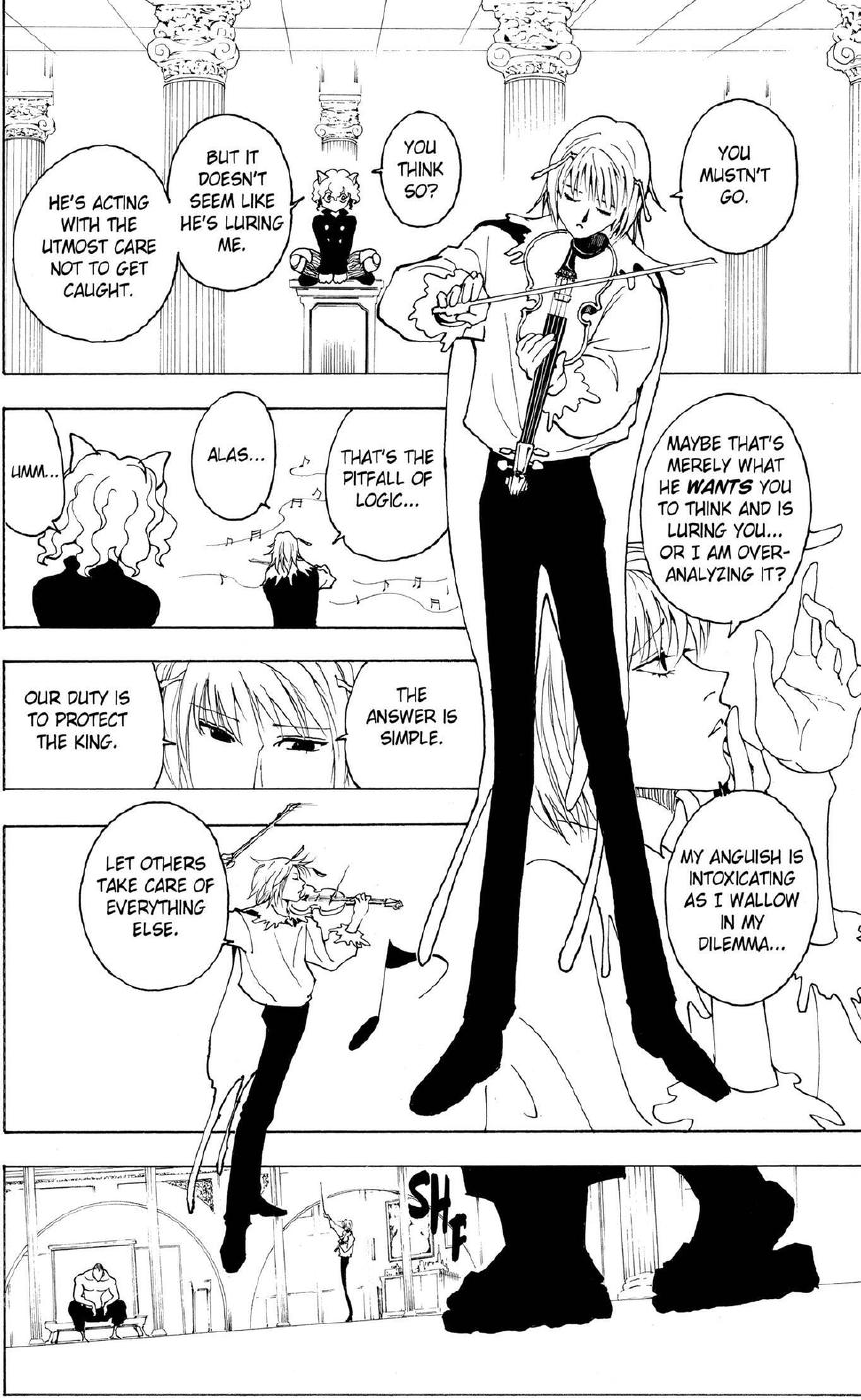

SOUTHEAST THIS TIME... THE PUPPETS ARE DISABLED ALREADY. HE'S FAST...
MEOWKAY, HE'S TRYING TO MAKE HIS NEXT MOVE UNPREDICTABLE.

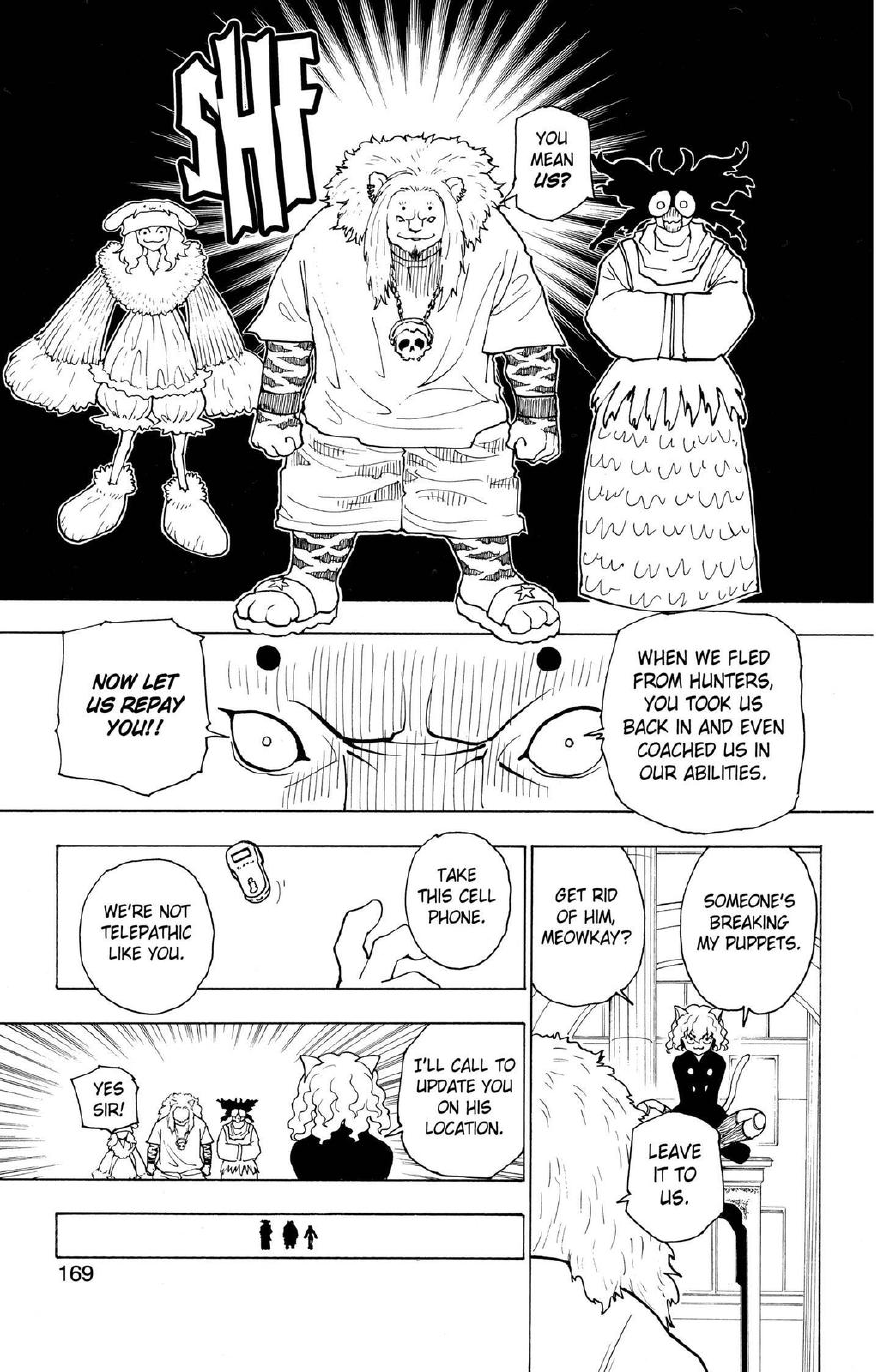
Chapter 234: 9: Part 5

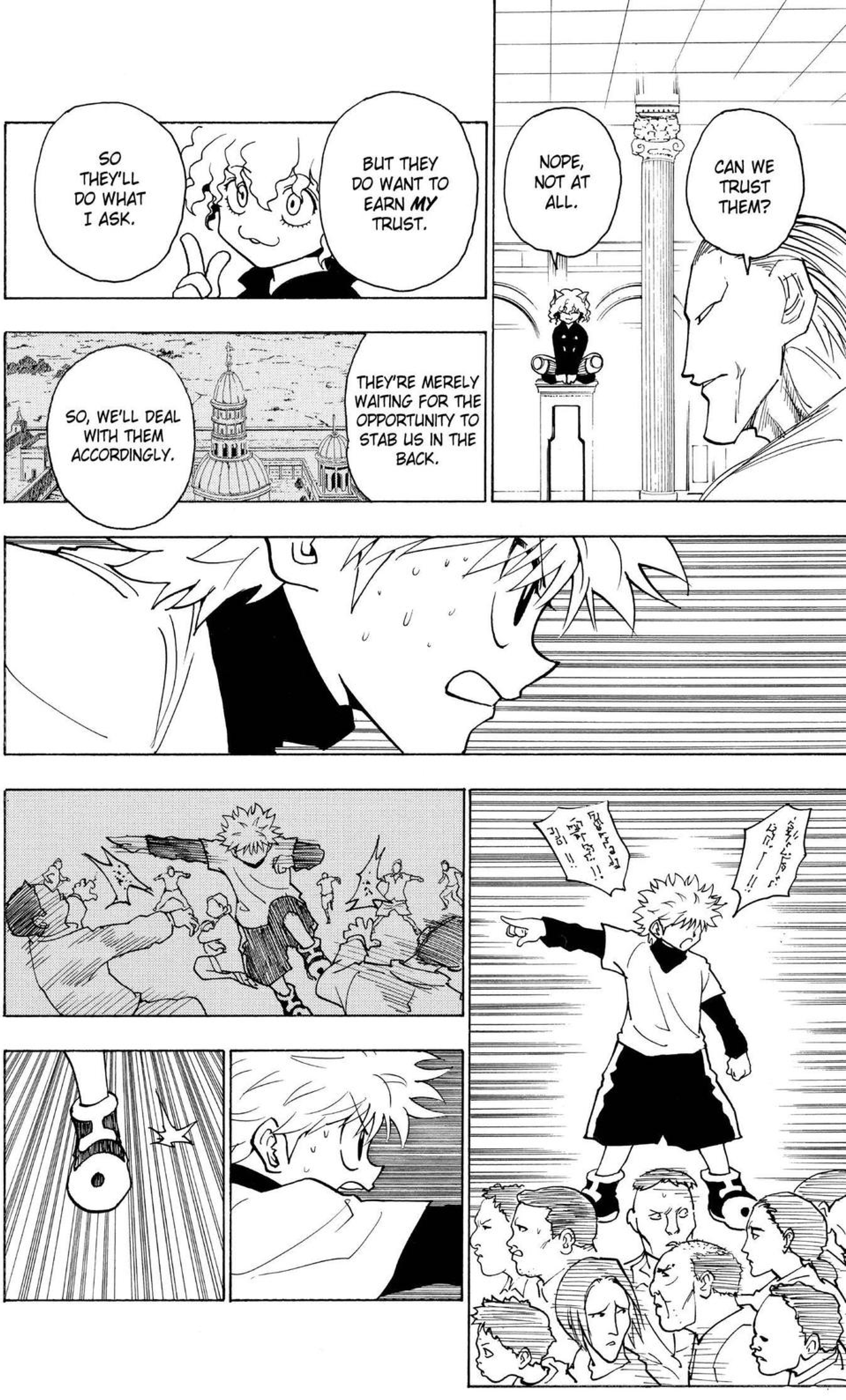

AN ASSASSIN?

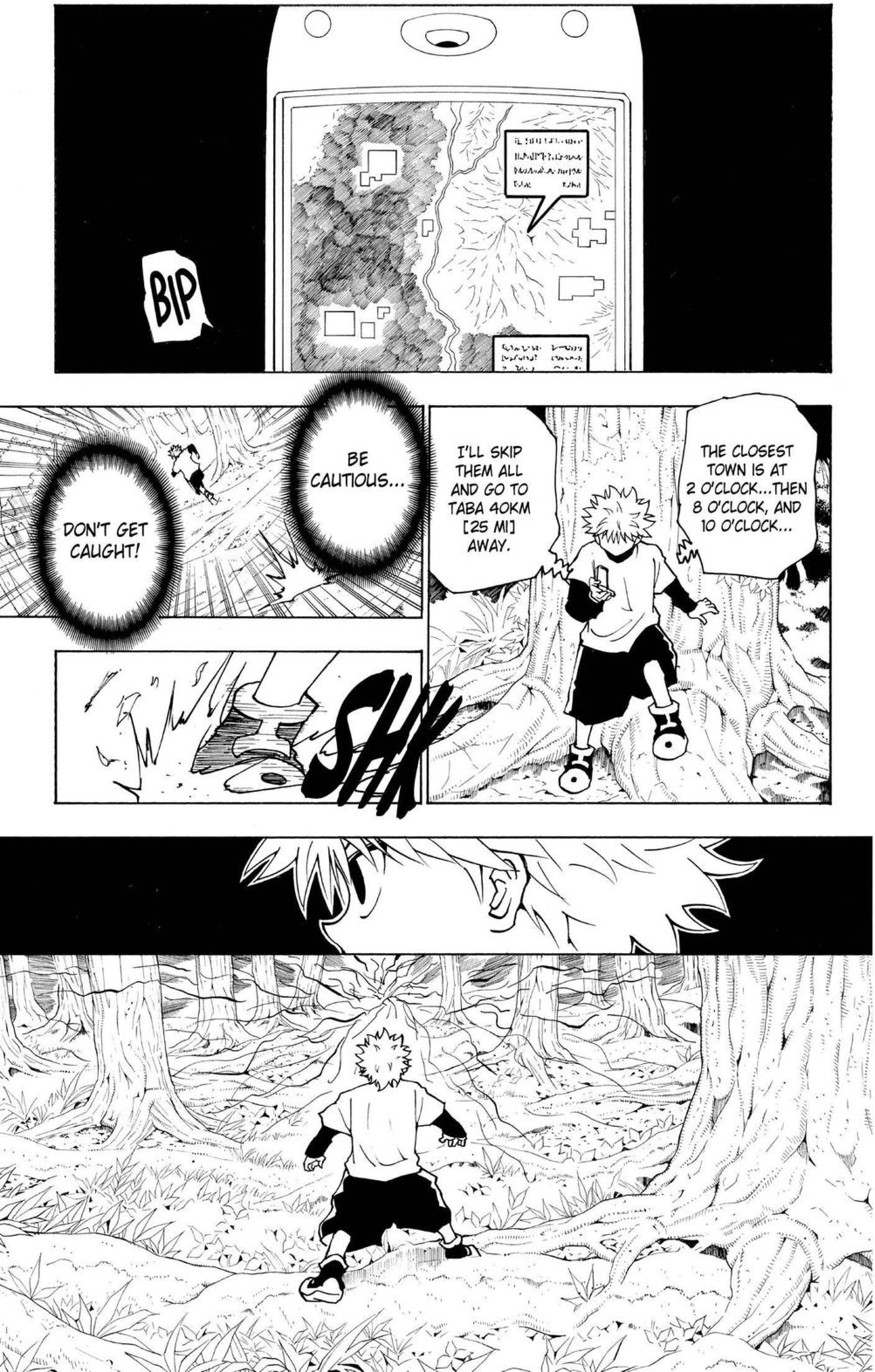

BUT...
HE'S ACTING ALONE.
A DECOY?
URG.
THIS IS ANNOYING!!
I WANNA GET RID OF HIM!!

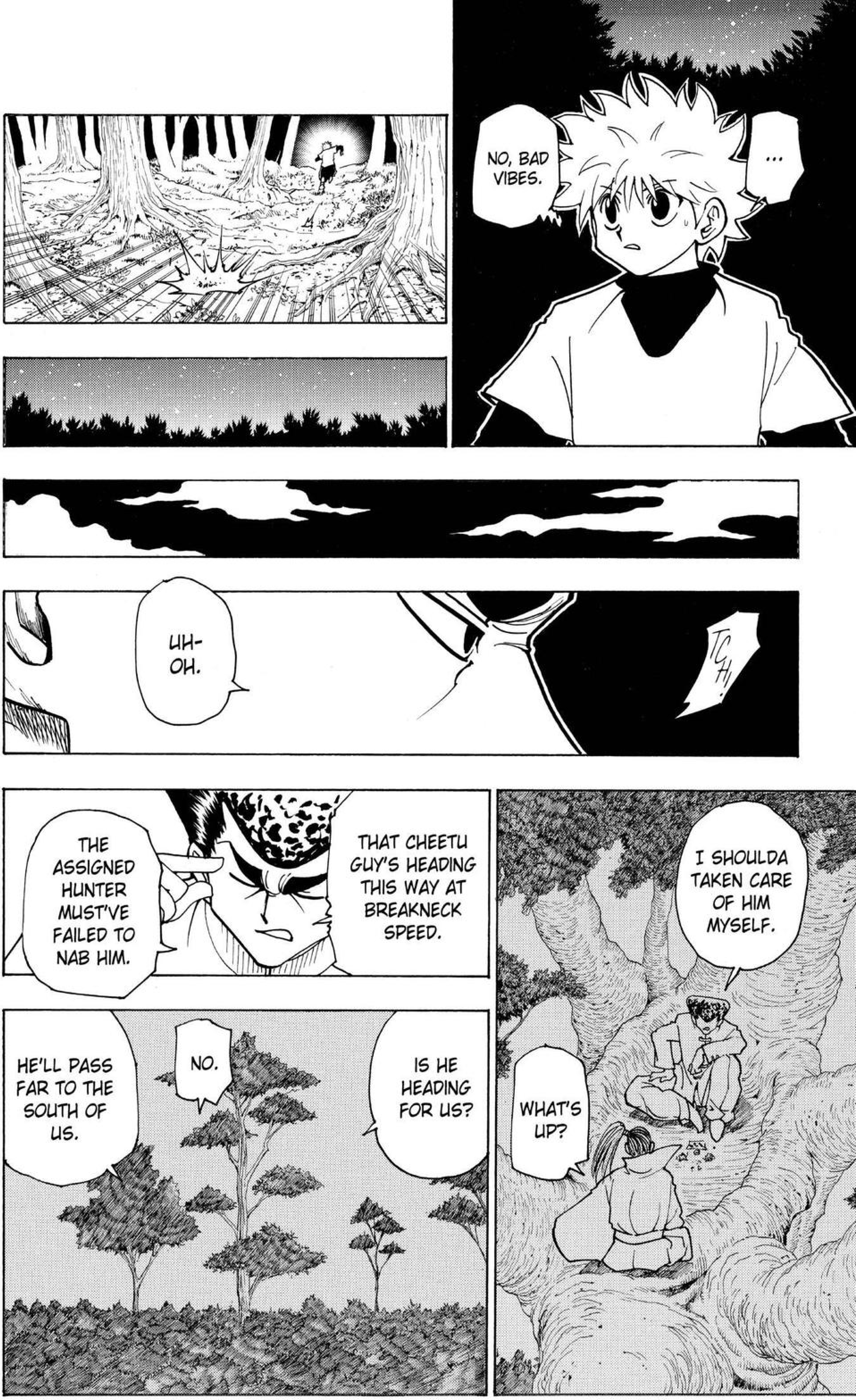

IT'S MERELY A DIVERSION...
NOTHING MORE...

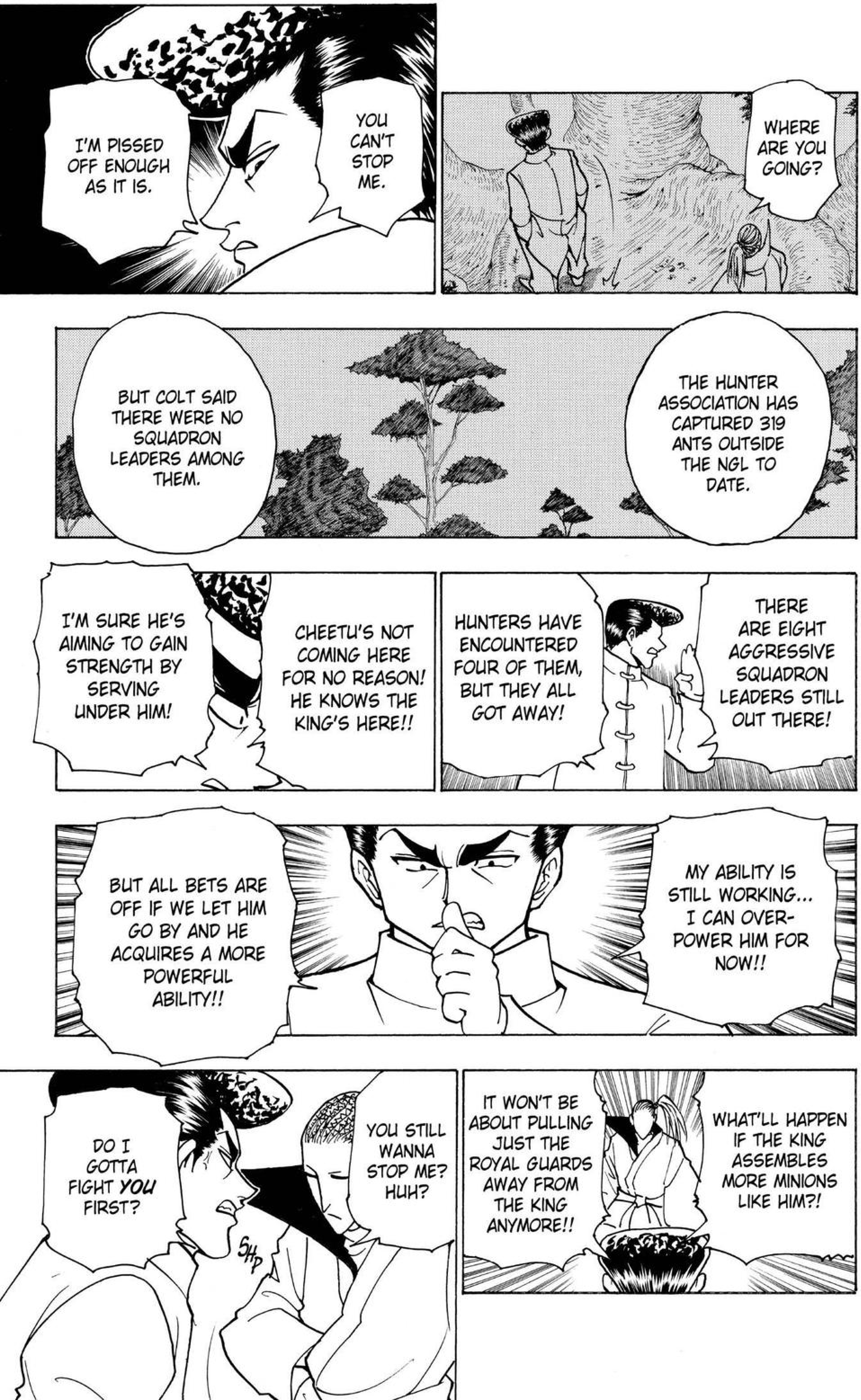

YOU MUSTN'T GO.
YOU THINK SO?
BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S LURING ME.
HE'S ACTING WITH THE UTMOST CARE NOT TO GET CAUGHT.
MAYBE THAT'S MERELY WHAT HE **WANTS** YOU TO THINK AND IS LURING YOU... OR I AM OVER-ANALYZING IT?
THAT'S THE PITFALL OF LOGIC...
ALAS...
UMM...
THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE.
OUR DUTY IS TO PROTECT THE KING.
MY ANGUISH IS INTOXICATING AS I WALLOW IN MY DILEMMA...
LET OTHERS TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING ELSE.
SHF

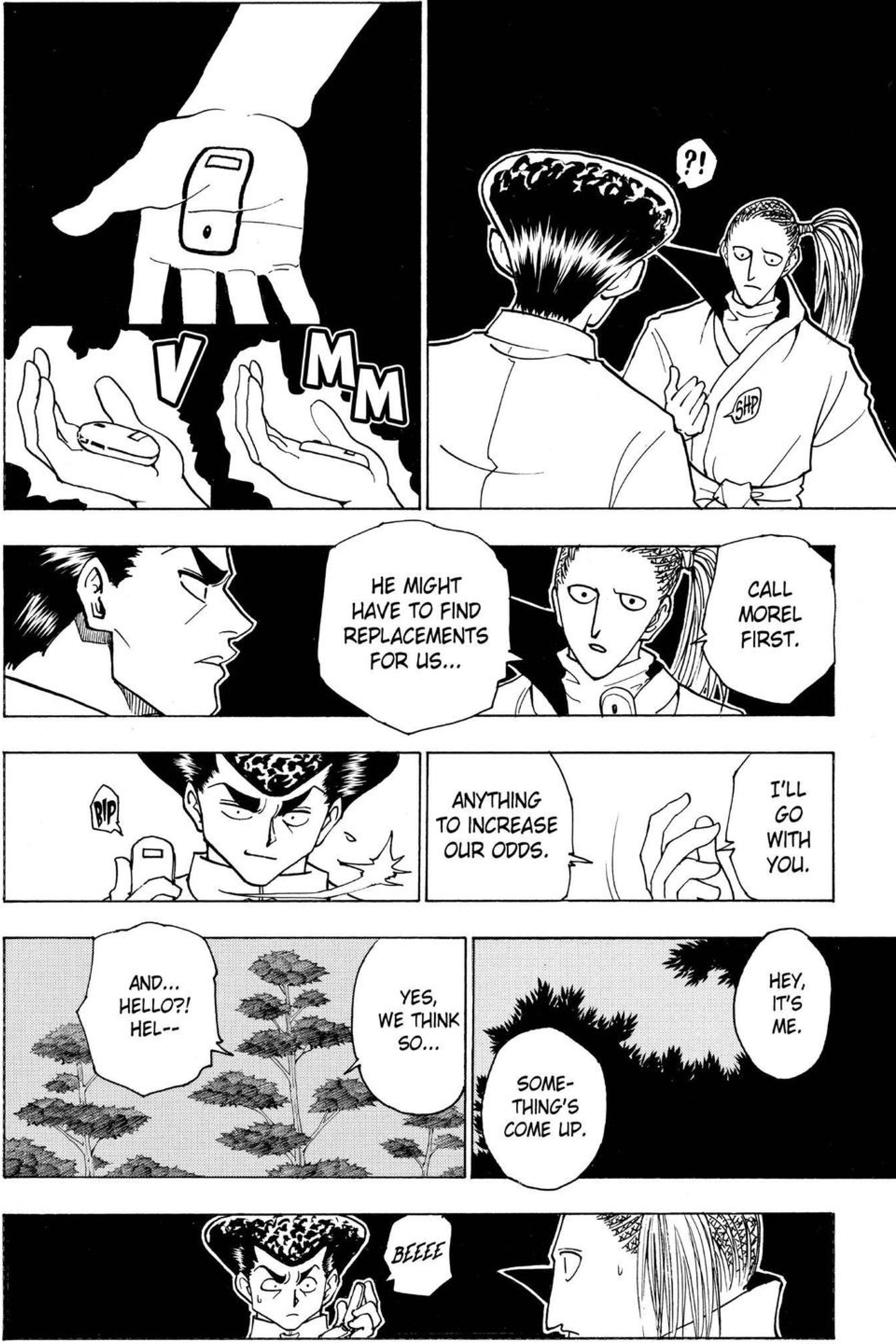

YOU MEAN US?
SHF
WHEN WE FLED FROM HUNTERS, YOU TOOK US BACK IN AND EVEN COACHED US IN OUR ABILITIES.
NOW LET US REPAY YOU!!
SOMEONE'S BREAKING MY PUPPETS.
GET RID OF HIM, MEOWKAY?
LEAVE IT TO US.
TAKE THIS CELL PHONE.
WE'RE NOT TELEPATHIC LIKE YOU.
I'LL CALL TO UPDATE YOU ON HIS LOCATION.
YES SIR!

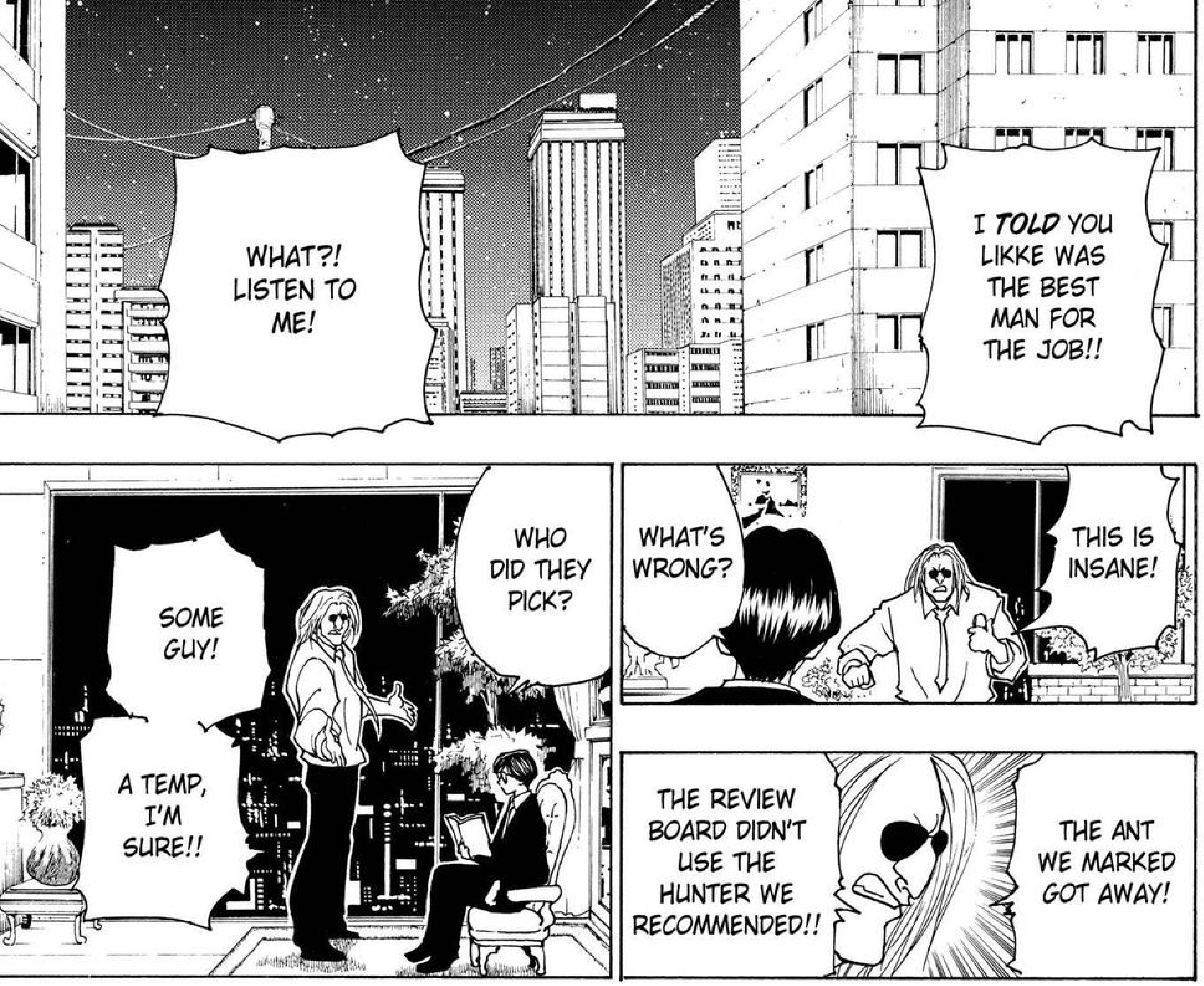

CAN WE TRUST THEM?
NOPE, NOT AT ALL.
BUT THEY DO WANT TO EARN *MY* TRUST.
SO THEY'LL DO WHAT I ASK.
THEY'RE MERELY WAITING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO STAB US IN THE BACK.
SO, WE'LL DEAL WITH THEM ACCORDINGLY.
ふざけんなーー!!


BIP
THE CLOSEST TOWN IS AT 2 O'CLOCK...THEN 8 O'CLOCK, AND 10 O'CLOCK...
I'LL SKIP THEM ALL AND GO TO TABA 40KM [25 MI] AWAY.
BE CAUTIOUS...
DON'T GET CAUGHT!
SHK


...
NO, BAD VIBES.
TCH!
UH-OH.
I SHOULDA TAKEN CARE OF HIM MYSELF.
WHAT'S UP?
THAT CHEETU GUY'S HEADING THIS WAY AT BREAKNECK SPEED.
THE ASSIGNED HUNTER MUST'VE FAILED TO NAB HIM.
IS HE HEADING FOR US?
NO.
HE'LL PASS FAR TO THE SOUTH OF US.

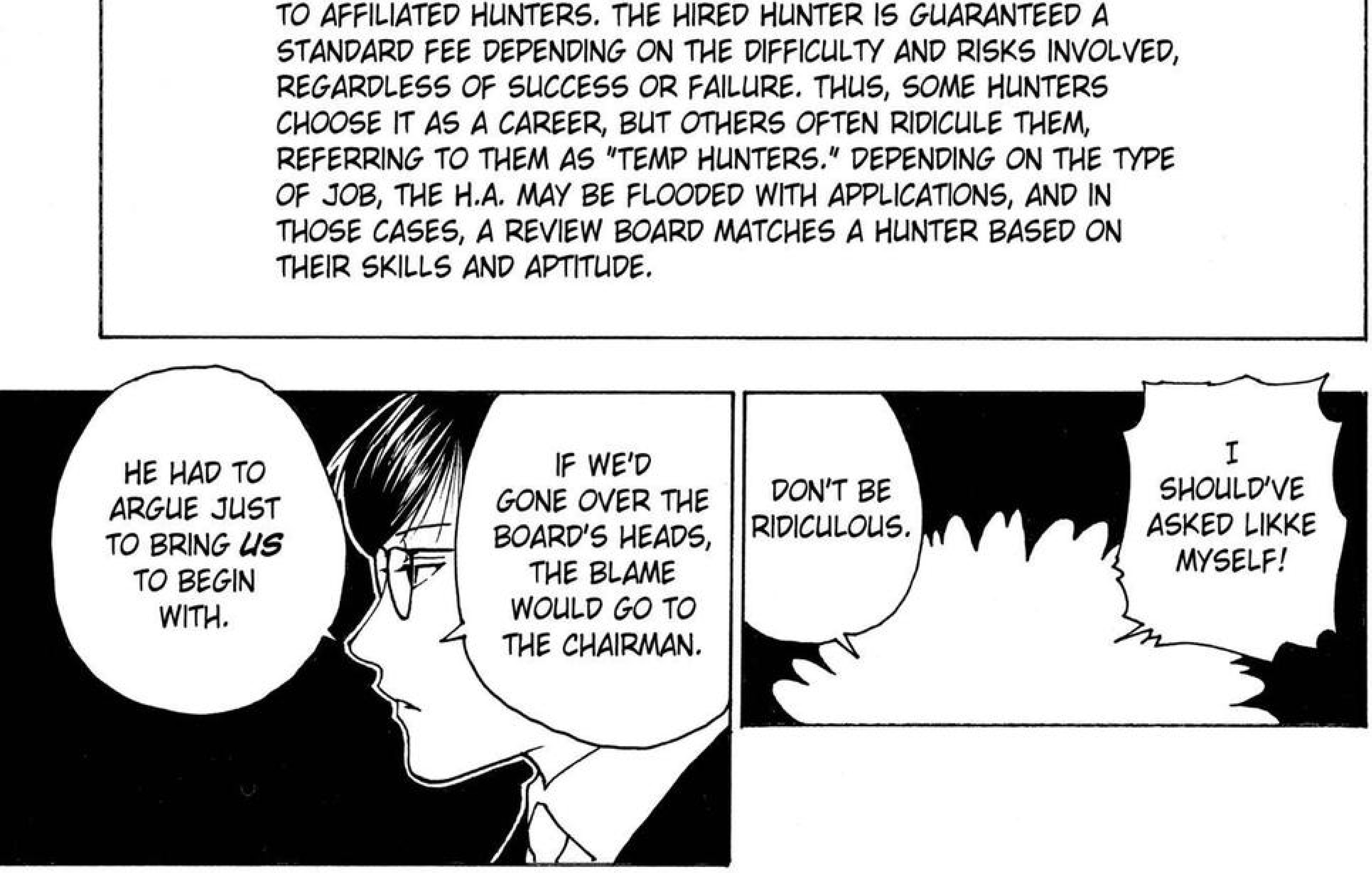

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
YOU CAN'T STOP ME.
I'M PISSED OFF ENOUGH AS IT IS.
THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION HAS CAPTURED 319 ANTS OUTSIDE THE NGL TO DATE.
BUT COLT SAID THERE WERE NO SQUADRON LEADERS AMONG THEM.
THERE ARE EIGHT AGGRESSIVE SQUADRON LEADERS STILL OUT THERE!
HUNTERS HAVE ENCOUNTERED FOUR OF THEM, BUT THEY ALL GOT AWAY!
CHEETU'S NOT COMING HERE FOR NO REASON! HE KNOWS THE KING'S HERE!!
I'M SURE HE'S AIMING TO GAIN STRENGTH BY SERVING UNDER HIM!
MY ABILITY IS STILL WORKING... I CAN OVERPOWER HIM FOR NOW!!
BUT ALL BETS ARE OFF IF WE LET HIM GO BY AND HE ACQUIRES A MORE POWERFUL ABILITY!!
WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF THE KING ASSEMBLES MORE MINIONS LIKE HIM?!
IT WON'T BE ABOUT PULLING JUST THE ROYAL GUARDS AWAY FROM THE KING ANYMORE!!
YOU STILL WANNA STOP ME? HUH?
SHP
DO I GOTTA FIGHT *YOU* FIRST?

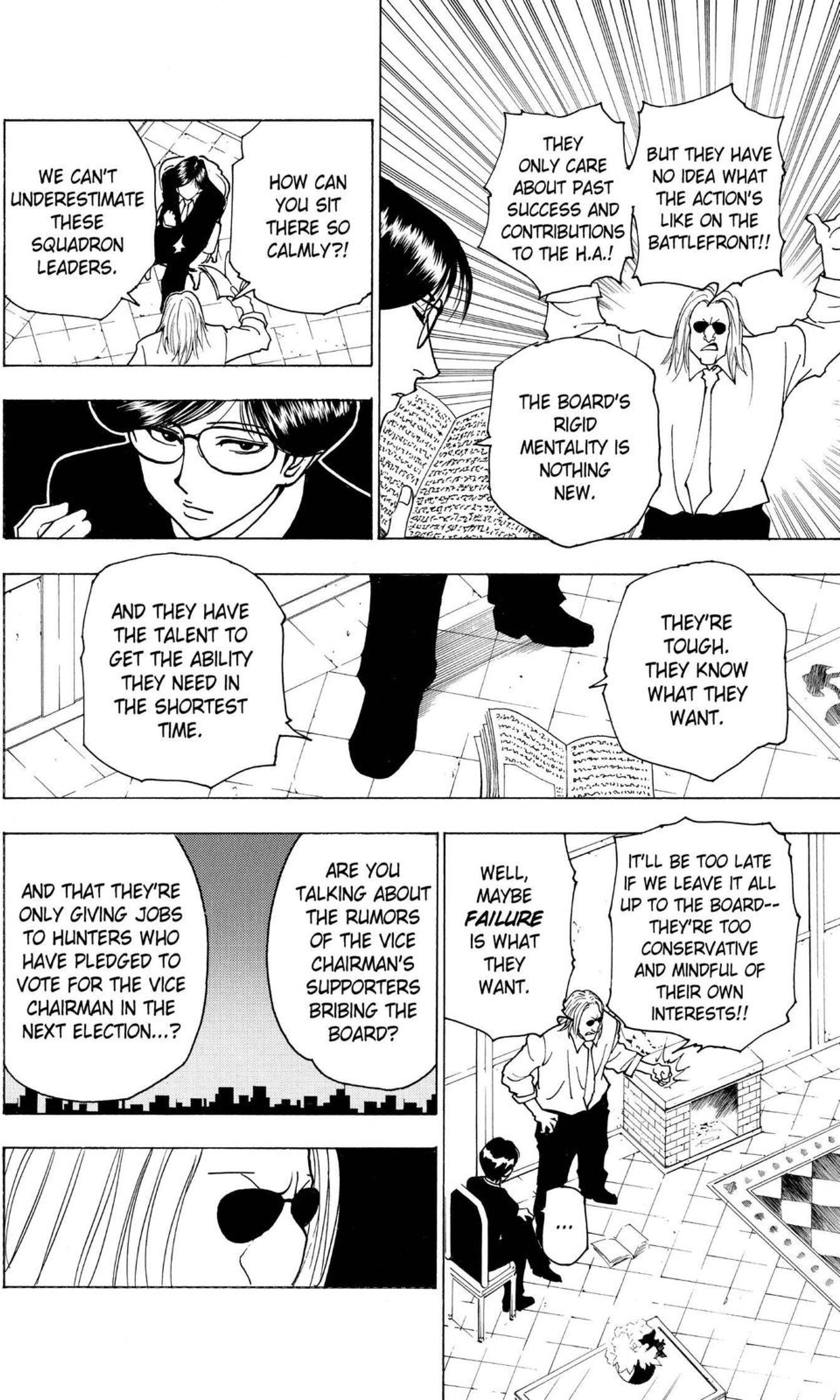

?!
SHP
V
MM
CALL MOREL FIRST.
HE MIGHT HAVE TO FIND REPLACEMENTS FOR US...
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
ANYTHING TO INCREASE OUR ODDS.
BIP
HEY, IT'S ME.
SOMETHING'S COME UP.
YES, WE THINK SO...
AND... HELLO?! HEL--
BEEEE

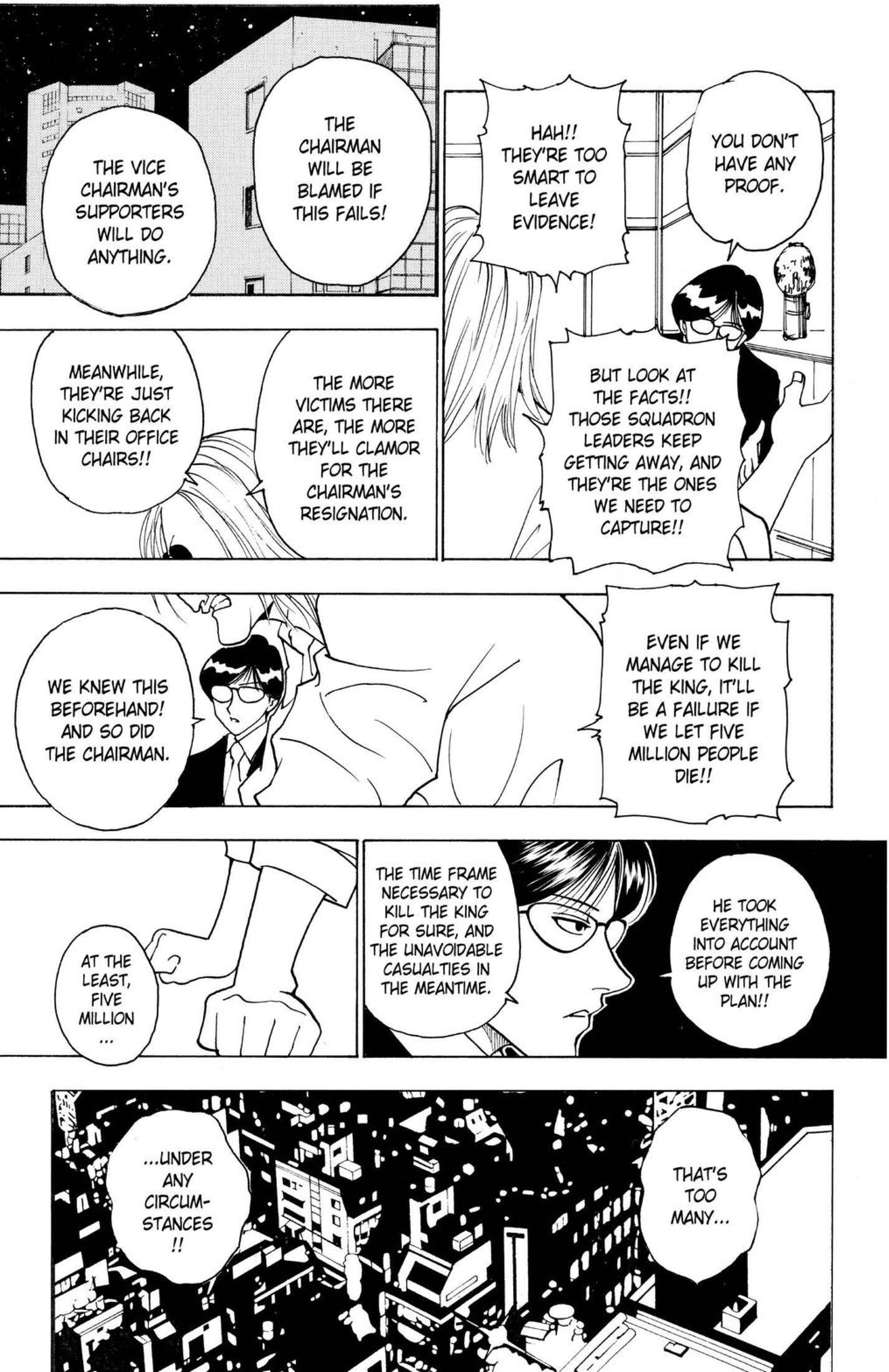

I *TOLD* YOU LIKKE WAS THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB!!
WHAT?! LISTEN TO ME!
THIS IS INSANE!
WHAT'S WRONG?
THE ANT WE MARKED GOT AWAY!
THE REVIEW BOARD DIDN'T USE THE HUNTER WE RECOMMENDED!!
WHO DID THEY PICK?
SOME GUY!
A TEMP, I'M SURE!!

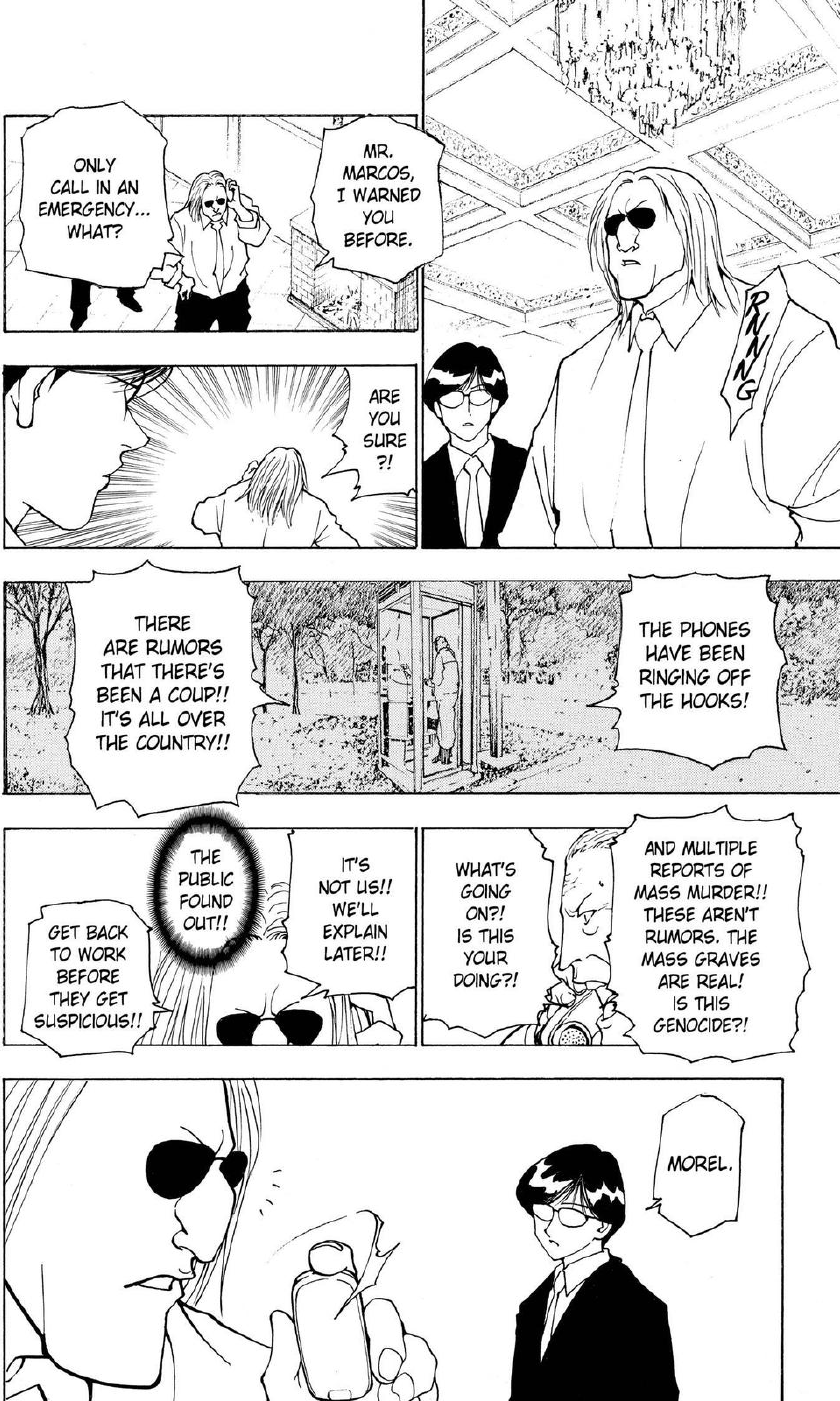
TEMP HUNTERS

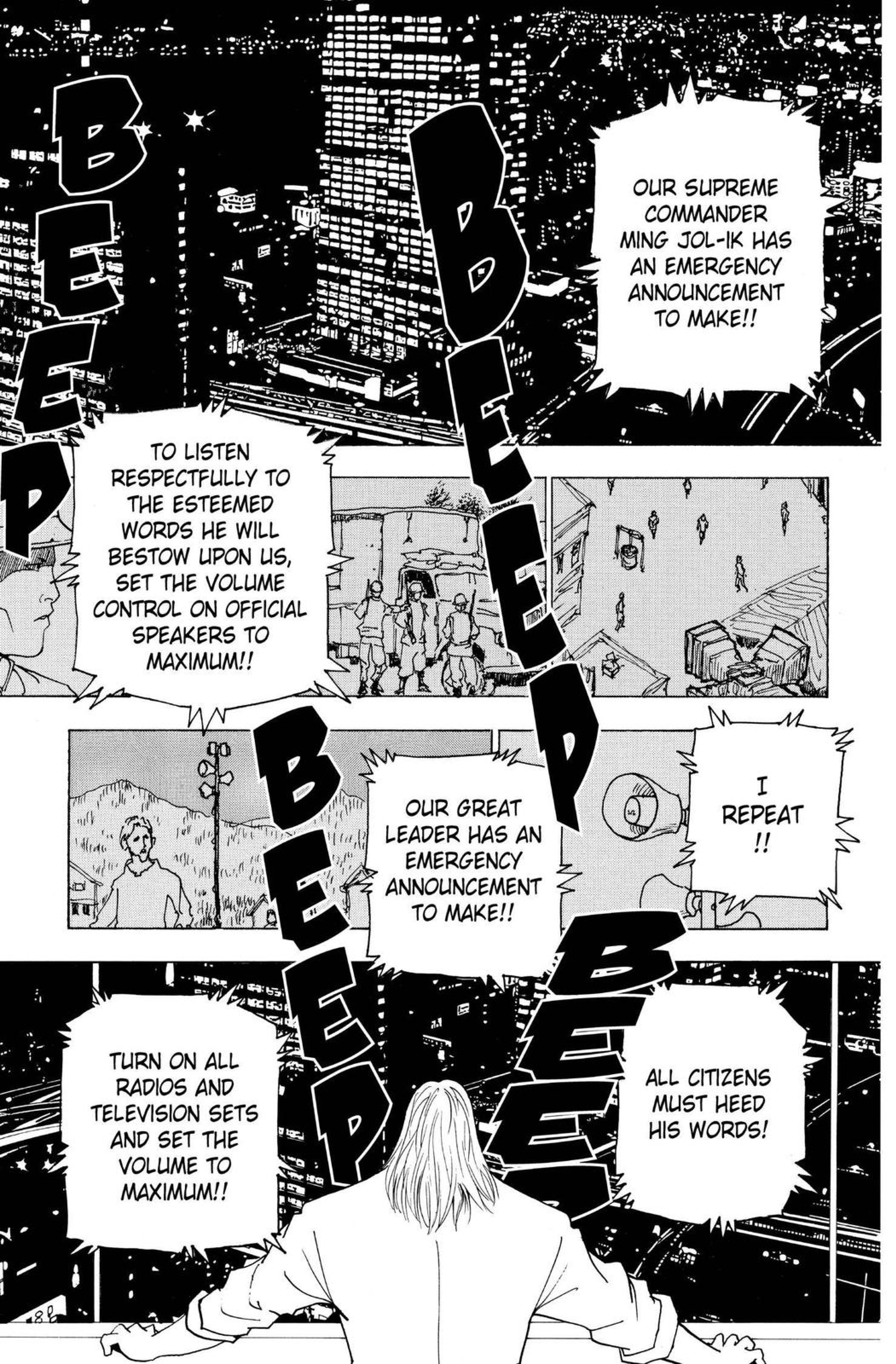
THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION OFTEN ACCEPTS JOBS FROM GOVERNMENTS OR PRIVATE BUSINESSES, AND SUBCONTRACTS THEM TO AFFILIATED HUNTERS. THE HIRED HUNTER IS GUARANTEED A STANDARD FEE DEPENDING ON THE DIFFICULTY AND RISKS INVOLVED, REGARDLESS OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE. THUS, SOME HUNTERS CHOOSE IT AS A CAREER, BUT OTHERS OFTEN RIDICULE THEM, REFERRING TO THEM AS "TEMP HUNTERS." DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF JOB, THE H.A. MAY BE FLOODED WITH APPLICATIONS, AND IN THOSE CASES, A REVIEW BOARD MATCHES A HUNTER BASED ON THEIR SKILLS AND APTITUDE.

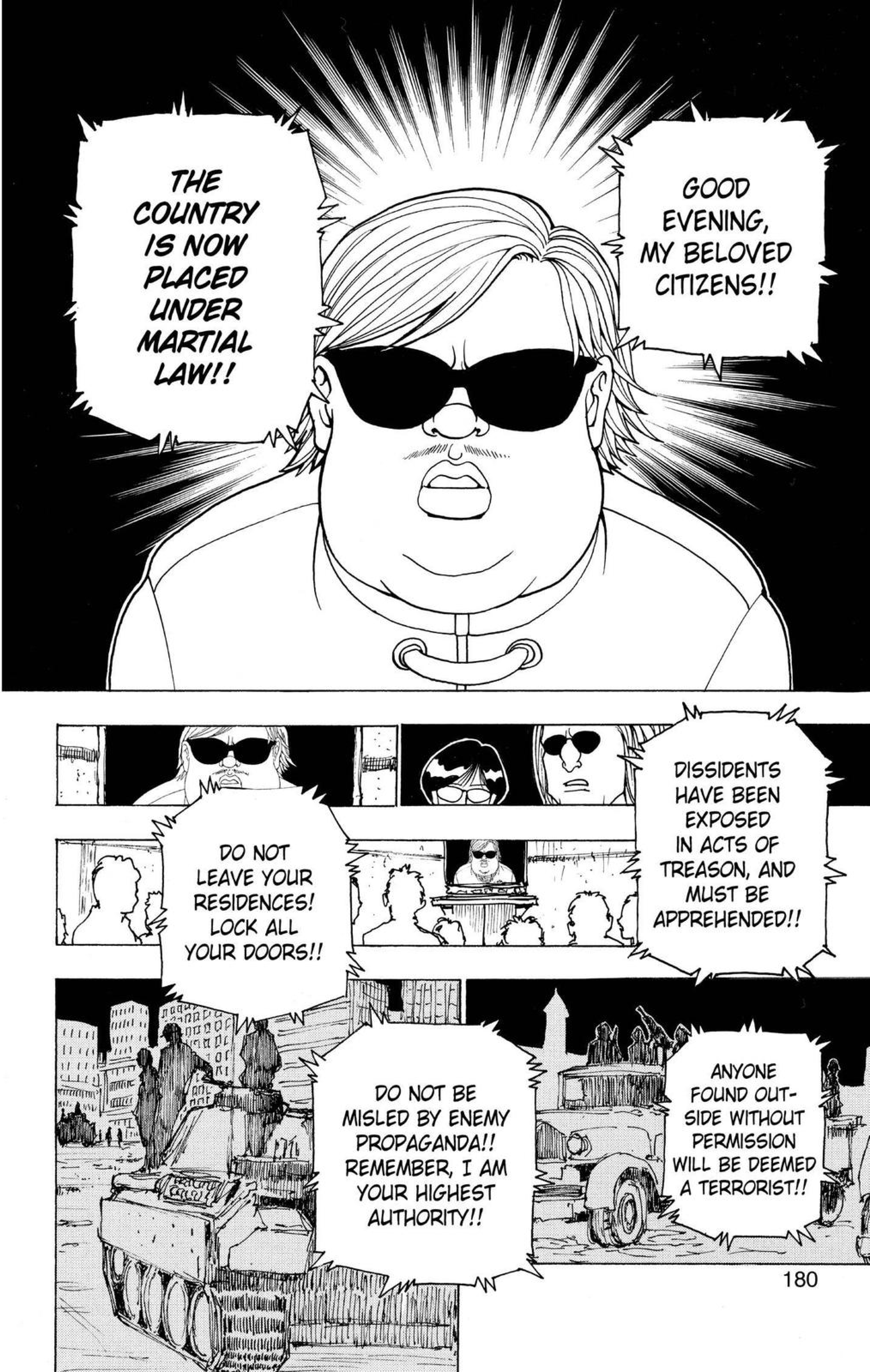

I SHOULD'VE ASKED LIKKE MYSELF!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
IF WE'D GONE OVER THE BOARD'S HEADS, THE BLAME WOULD GO TO THE CHAIRMAN.
HE HAD TO ARGUE JUST TO BRING *US* TO BEGIN WITH.

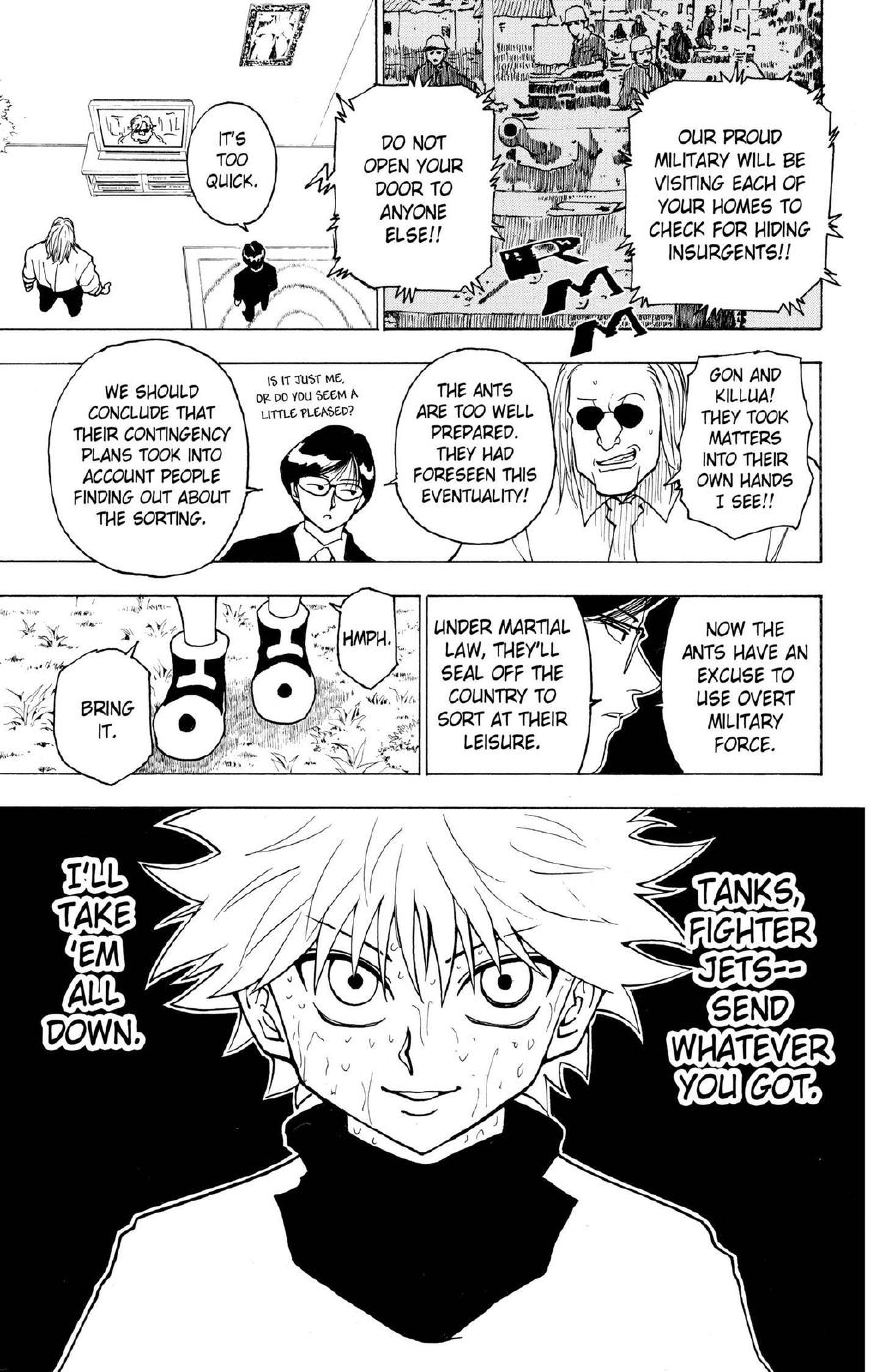

THEY ONLY CARE ABOUT PAST SUCCESS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE H.A.!
BUT THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE ACTION'S LIKE ON THE BATTLEFRONT!!
THE BOARD'S RIGID MENTALITY IS NOTHING NEW.
HOW CAN YOU SIT THERE SO CALMLY?!
WE CAN'T UNDERESTIMATE THESE SQUADRON LEADERS.
THEY'RE TOUGH. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT.
AND THEY HAVE THE TALENT TO GET THE ABILITY THEY NEED IN THE SHORTEST TIME.
IT'LL BE TOO LATE IF WE LEAVE IT ALL UP TO THE BOARD-- THEY'RE TOO CONSERVATIVE AND MINDFUL OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS!!
WELL, MAYBE ***FAILURE*** IS WHAT THEY WANT.
...
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE RUMORS OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN'S SUPPORTERS BRIBING THE BOARD?
AND THAT THEY'RE ONLY GIVING JOBS TO HUNTERS WHO HAVE PLEDGED TO VOTE FOR THE VICE CHAIRMAN IN THE NEXT ELECTION...?


THE CHAIRMAN WILL BE BLAMED IF THIS FAILS!
THE VICE CHAIRMAN'S SUPPORTERS WILL DO ANYTHING.
THE MORE VICTIMS THERE ARE, THE MORE THEY'LL CLAMOR FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S RESIGNATION.
MEANWHILE, THEY'RE JUST KICKING BACK IN THEIR OFFICE CHAIRS!!
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF.
HAH!! THEY'RE TOO SMART TO LEAVE EVIDENCE!
BUT LOOK AT THE FACTS!! THOSE SQUADRON LEADERS KEEP GETTING AWAY, AND THEY'RE THE ONES WE NEED TO CAPTURE!!
EVEN IF WE MANAGE TO KILL THE KING, IT'LL BE A FAILURE IF WE LET FIVE MILLION PEOPLE DIE!!
WE KNEW THIS BEFOREHAND! AND SO DID THE CHAIRMAN.
HE TOOK EVERYTHING INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE COMING UP WITH THE PLAN!!
THE TIME FRAME NECESSARY TO KILL THE KING FOR SURE, AND THE UNAVOIDABLE CASUALTIES IN THE MEANTIME.
AT THE LEAST, FIVE MILLION ...
THAT'S TOO MANY...
...UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!!

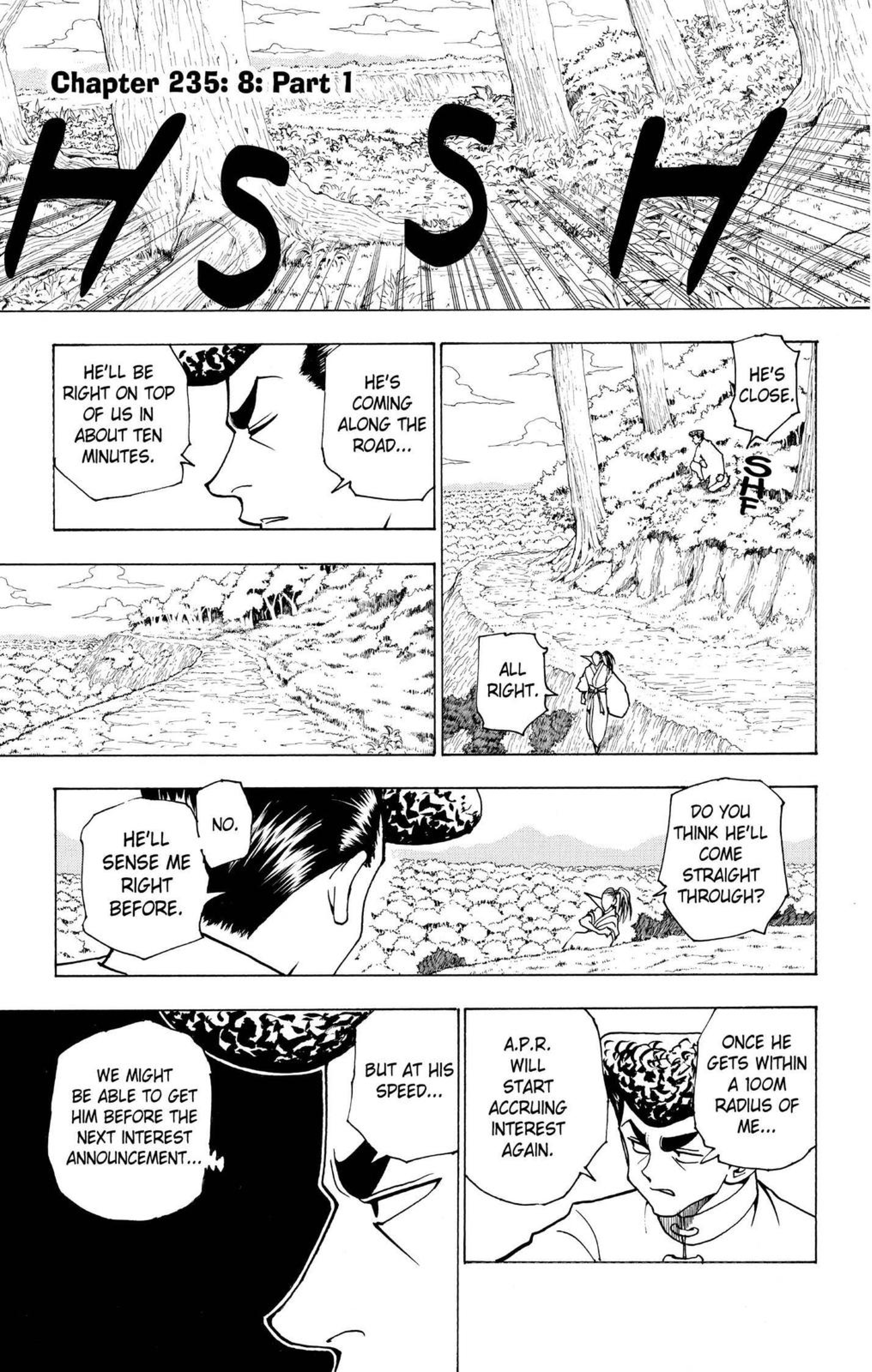

RNNNG
MR. MARCOS, I WARNED YOU BEFORE.
ONLY CALL IN AN EMERGENCY... WHAT?
ARE YOU SURE?!
THE PHONES HAVE BEEN RINGING OFF THE HOOKS!
THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THERE'S BEEN A COUP!! IT'S ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!!
AND MULTIPLE REPORTS OF MASS MURDER!! THESE AREN'T RUMORS. THE MASS GRAVES ARE REAL! IS THIS GENOCIDE?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?! IS THIS YOUR DOING?!
IT'S NOT US!! WE'LL EXPLAIN LATER!!
THE PUBLIC FOUND OUT!!
GET BACK TO WORK BEFORE THEY GET SUSPICIOUS!!
MOREL.

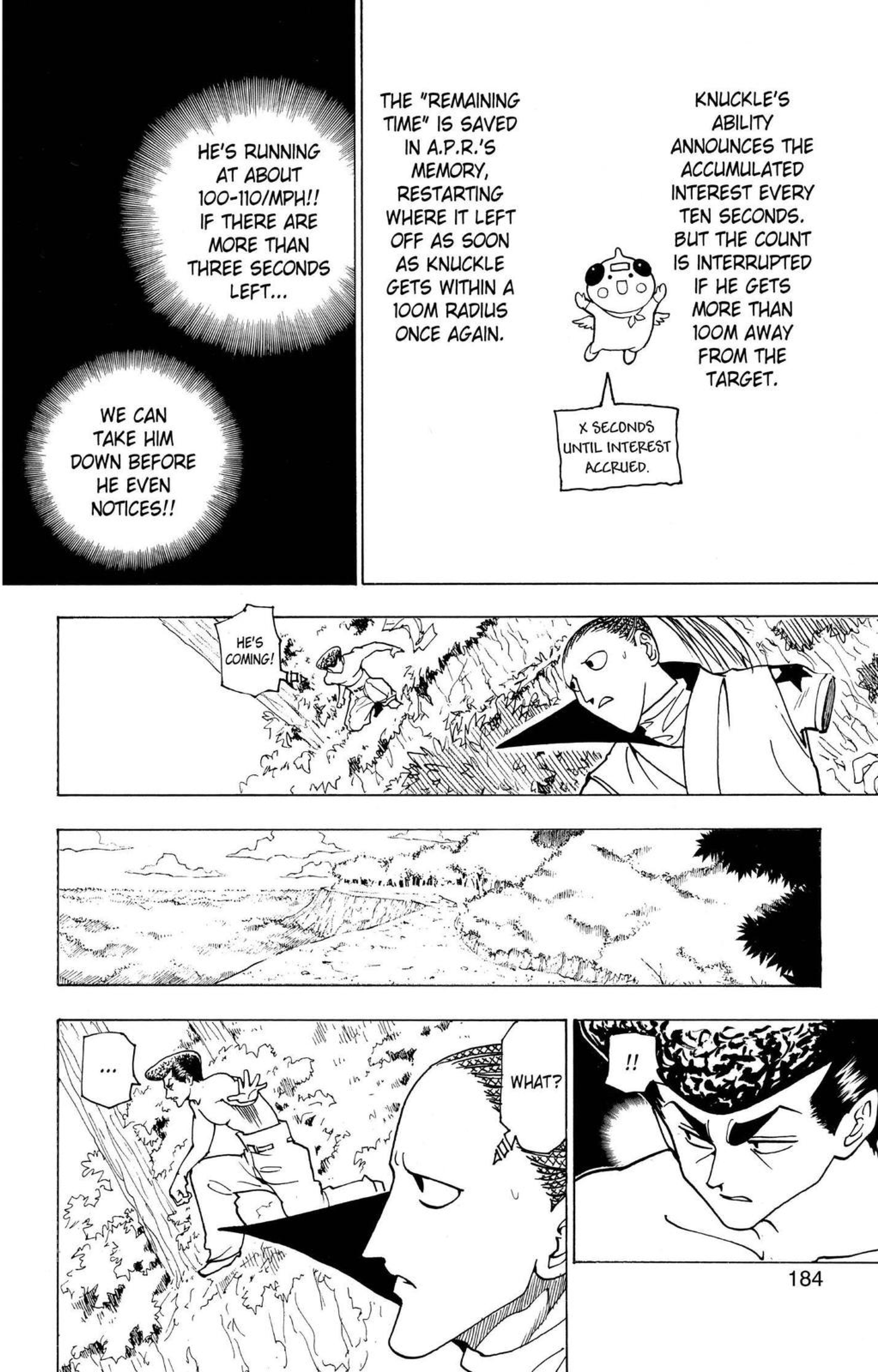

OUR SUPREME COMMANDER MING JOL-IK HAS AN EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!!
BEEP
BEEP
TO LISTEN RESPECTFULLY TO THE ESTEEMED WORDS HE WILL BESTOW UPON US, SET THE VOLUME CONTROL ON OFFICIAL SPEAKERS TO MAXIMUM!!
I REPEAT!!
OUR GREAT LEADER HAS AN EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!!
BEEP
BEE
ALL CITIZENS MUST HEED HIS WORDS!
TURN ON ALL RADIOS AND TELEVISION SETS AND SET THE VOLUME TO MAXIMUM!!

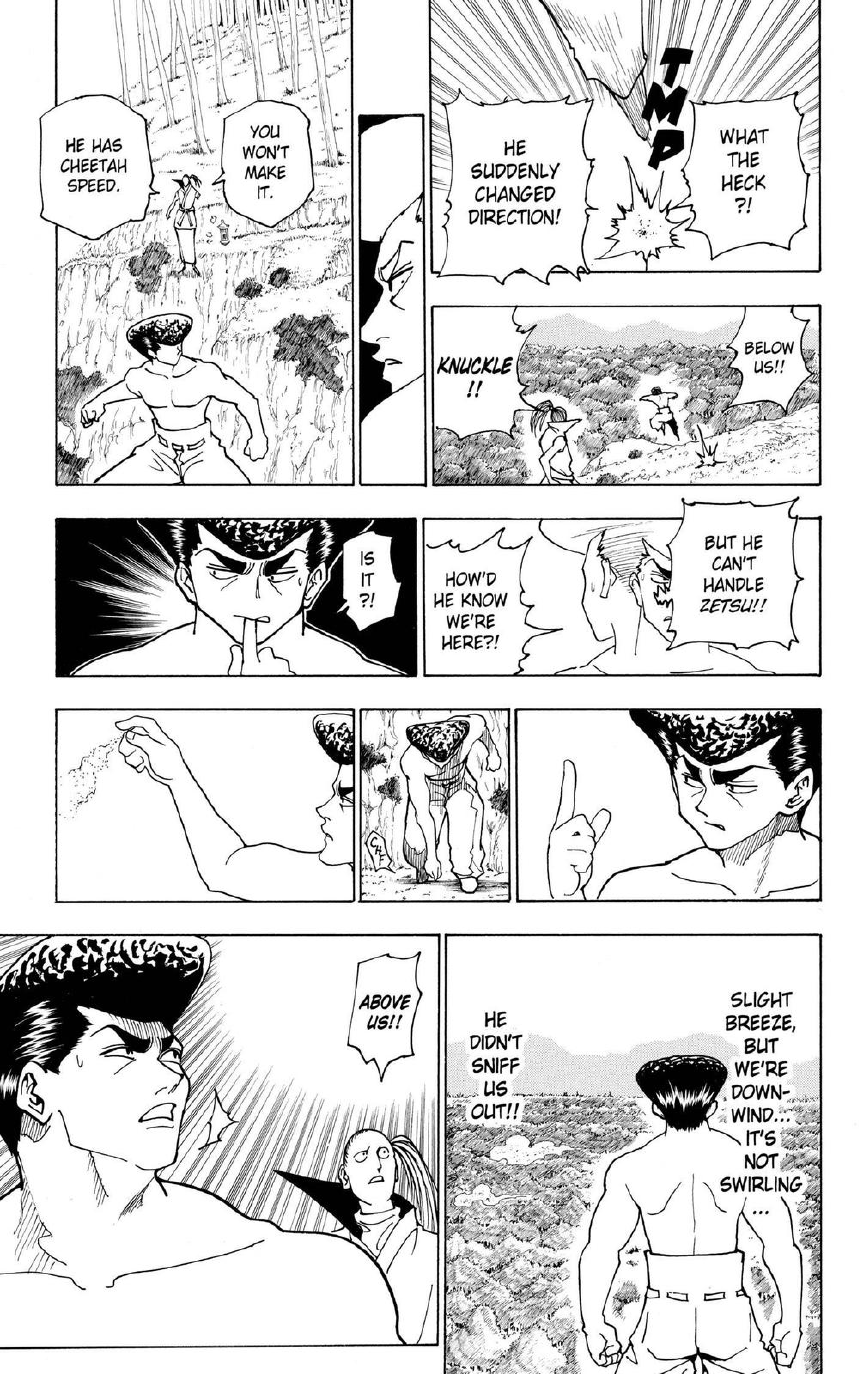

GOOD EVENING, MY BELOVED CITIZENS!!
THE COUNTRY IS NOW PLACED UNDER MARTIAL LAW!!
DISSIDENTS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED IN ACTS OF TREASON, AND MUST BE APPREHENDED!!
DO NOT LEAVE YOUR RESIDENCES! LOCK ALL YOUR DOORS!!
ANYONE FOUND OUTSIDE WITHOUT PERMISSION WILL BE DEEMED A TERRORIST!!
DO NOT BE MISLED BY ENEMY PROPAGANDA!! REMEMBER, I AM YOUR HIGHEST AUTHORITY!!

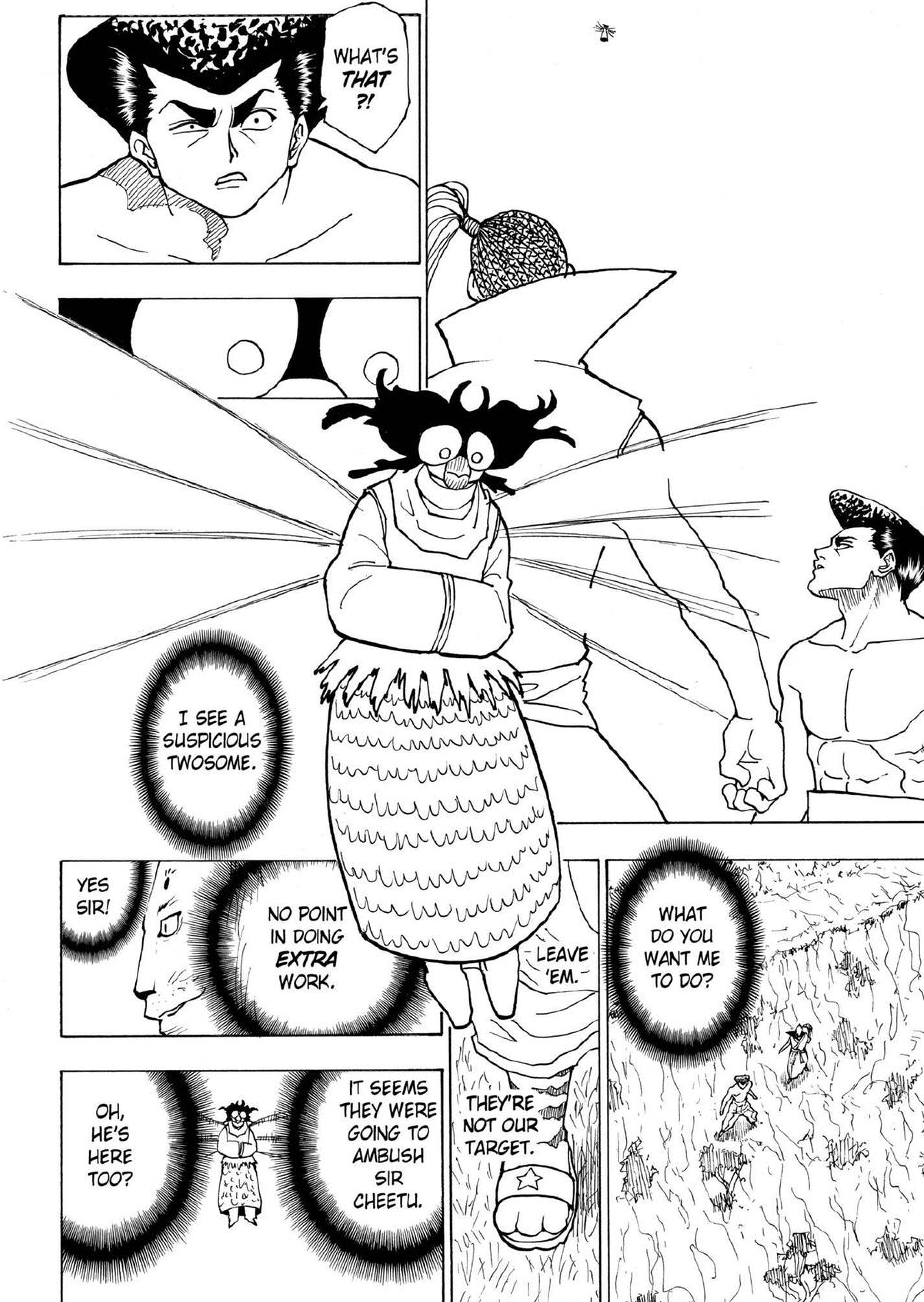

OUR PROUD MILITARY WILL BE VISITING EACH OF YOUR HOMES TO CHECK FOR HIDING INSURGENTS!!
DO NOT OPEN YOUR DOOR TO ANYONE ELSE!!
RMM
IT'S TOO QUICK.
GON AND KILLUA! THEY TOOK MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS I SEE!!
THE ANTS ARE TOO WELL PREPARED. THEY HAD FORESEEN THIS EVENTUALITY!
IS IT JUST ME, OR DO YOU SEEM A LITTLE PLEASED?
WE SHOULD CONCLUDE THAT THEIR CONTINGENCY PLANS TOOK INTO ACCOUNT PEOPLE FINDING OUT ABOUT THE SORTING.
NOW THE ANTS HAVE AN EXCUSE TO USE OVERT MILITARY FORCE.
UNDER MARTIAL LAW, THEY'LL SEAL OFF THE COUNTRY TO SORT AT THEIR LEISURE.
HMPH.
BRING IT.
TANKS, FIGHTER JETS-- SEND WHATEVER YOU GOT.
I'LL TAKE 'EM ALL DOWN.

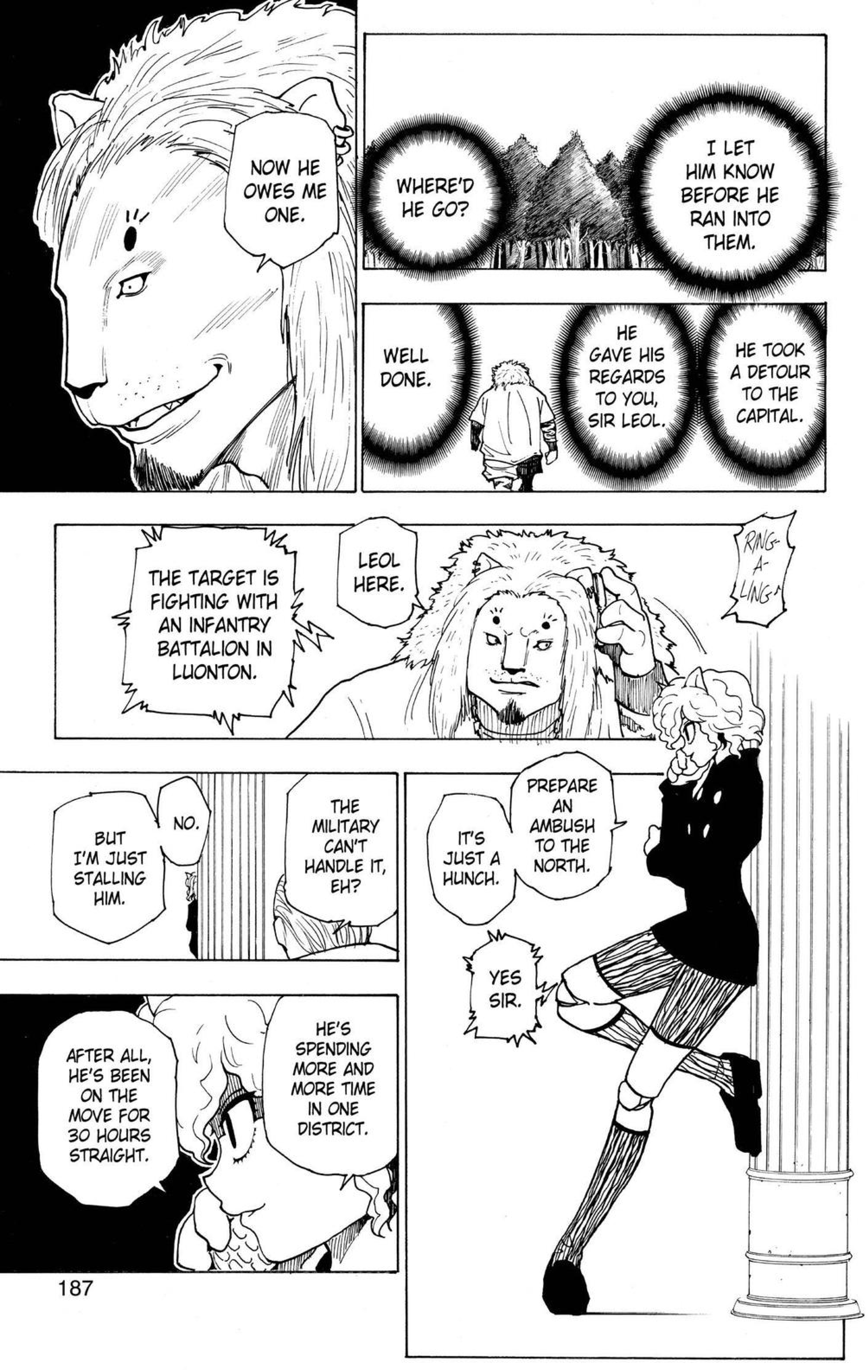
Chapter 235: 8: Part 1

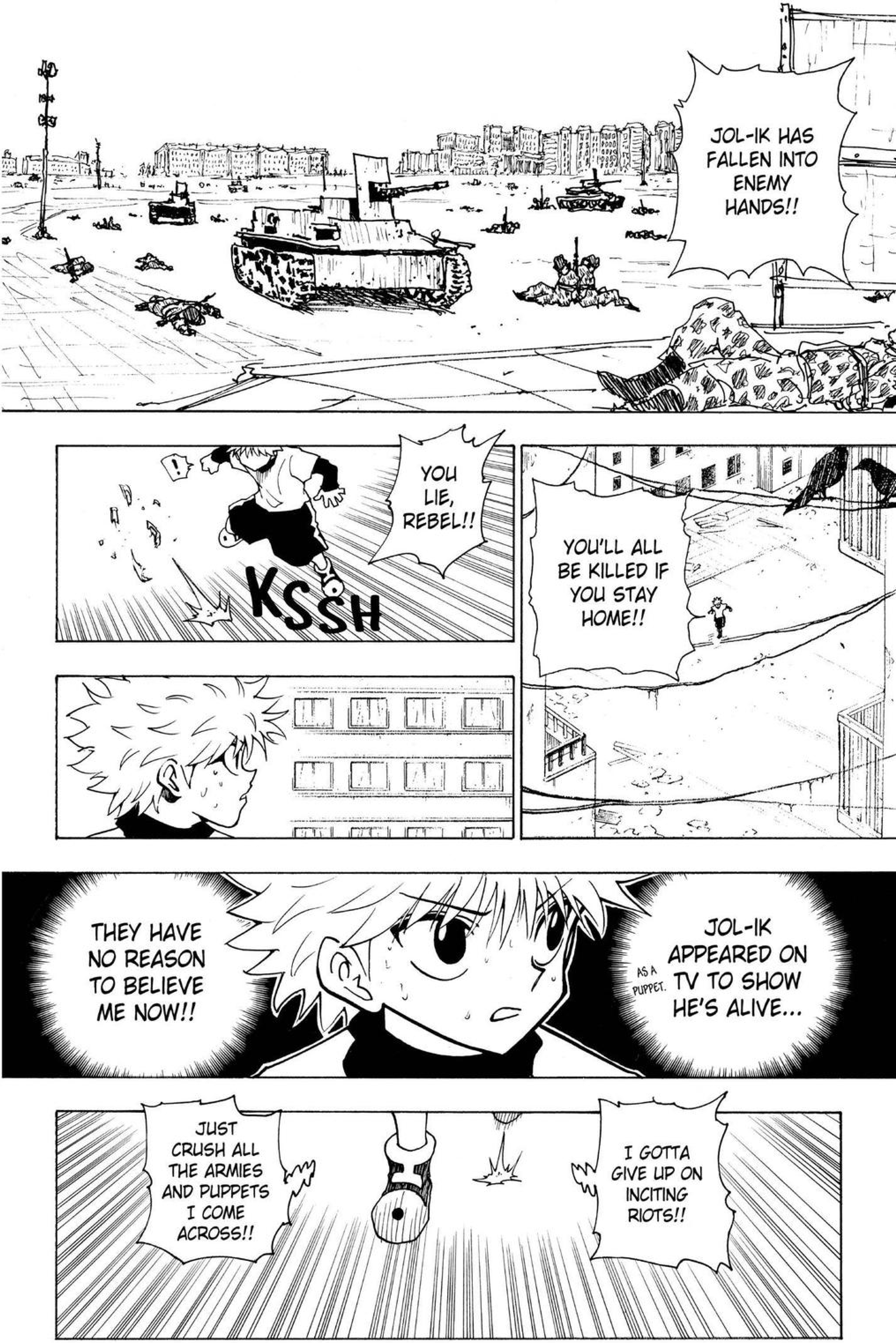

HSSH
HE'S CLOSE.
SHF
ALL RIGHT.
HE'S COMING ALONG THE ROAD...
HE'LL BE RIGHT ON TOP OF US IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES.
DO YOU THINK HE'LL COME STRAIGHT THROUGH?
NO.
HE'LL SENSE ME RIGHT BEFORE.
ONCE HE GETS WITHIN A 100M RADIUS OF ME...
A.P.R. WILL START ACCRUING INTEREST AGAIN.
BUT AT HIS SPEED...
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET HIM BEFORE THE NEXT INTEREST ANNOUNCEMENT...

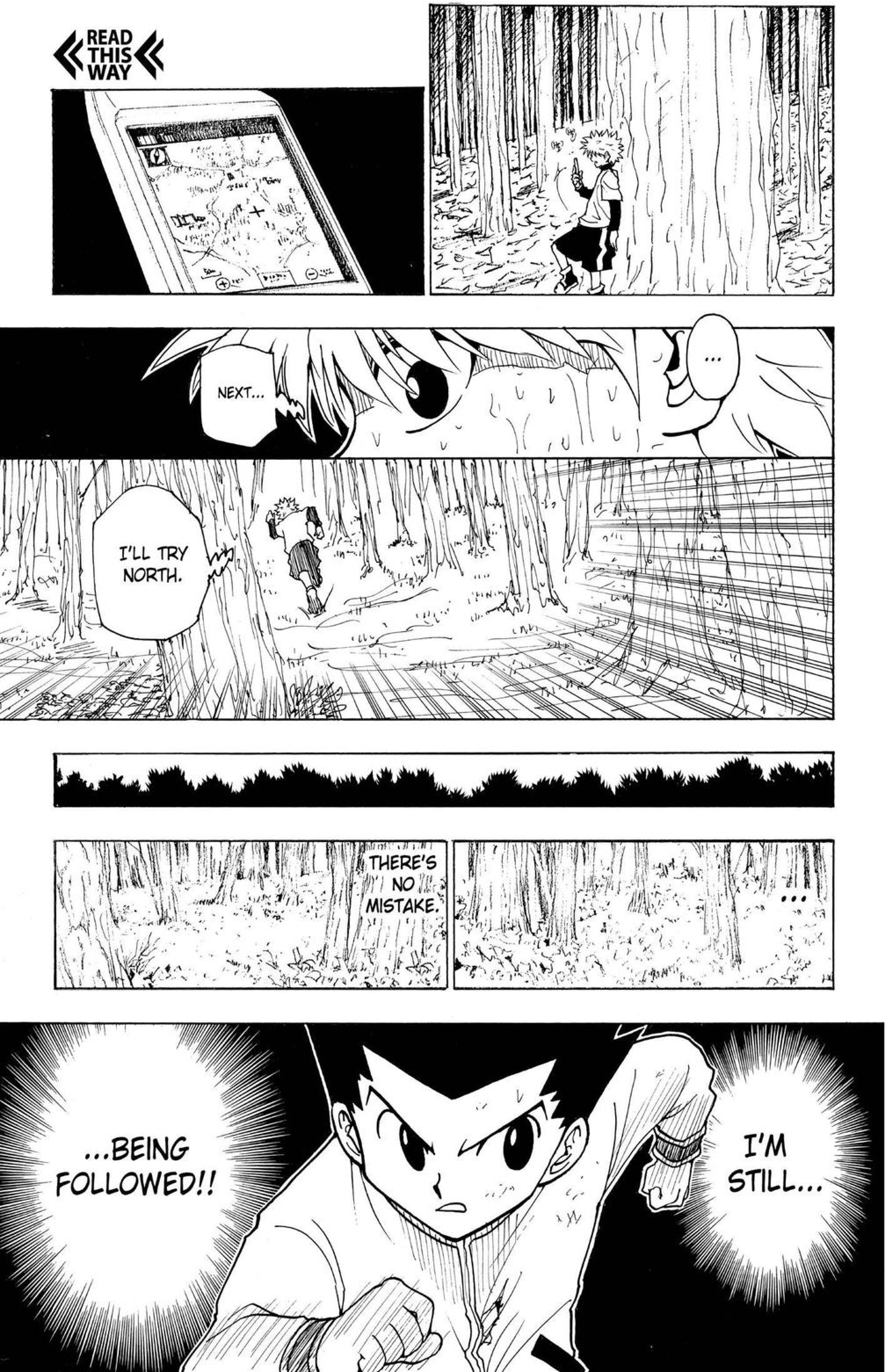

KNUCKLE'S ABILITY ANNOUNCES THE ACCUMULATED INTEREST EVERY TEN SECONDS. BUT THE COUNT IS INTERRUPTED IF HE GETS MORE THAN 100M AWAY FROM THE TARGET.
X SECONDS UNTIL INTEREST ACCRUED.
THE "REMAINING TIME" IS SAVED IN A.P.R.'S MEMORY, RESTARTING WHERE IT LEFT OFF AS SOON AS KNUCKLE GETS WITHIN A 100M RADIUS ONCE AGAIN.
HE'S RUNNING AT ABOUT 100-110/MPH!! IF THERE ARE MORE THAN THREE SECONDS LEFT...
WE CAN TAKE HIM DOWN BEFORE HE EVEN NOTICES!!
HE'S COMING!
!!
WHAT?
...


TMP
WHAT THE HECK?!
HE SUDDENLY CHANGED DIRECTION!
BELOW US!!
KNUCKLE!!
YOU WON'T MAKE IT.
HE HAS CHEETAH SPEED.
BUT HE CAN'T HANDLE ZETSU!!
HOW'D HE KNOW WE'RE HERE?!
IS IT?!
CHF
SLIGHT BREEZE, BUT WE'RE DOWNWIND... IT'S NOT SWIRLING...
HE DIDN'T SNIFF US OUT!!
ABOVE US!!

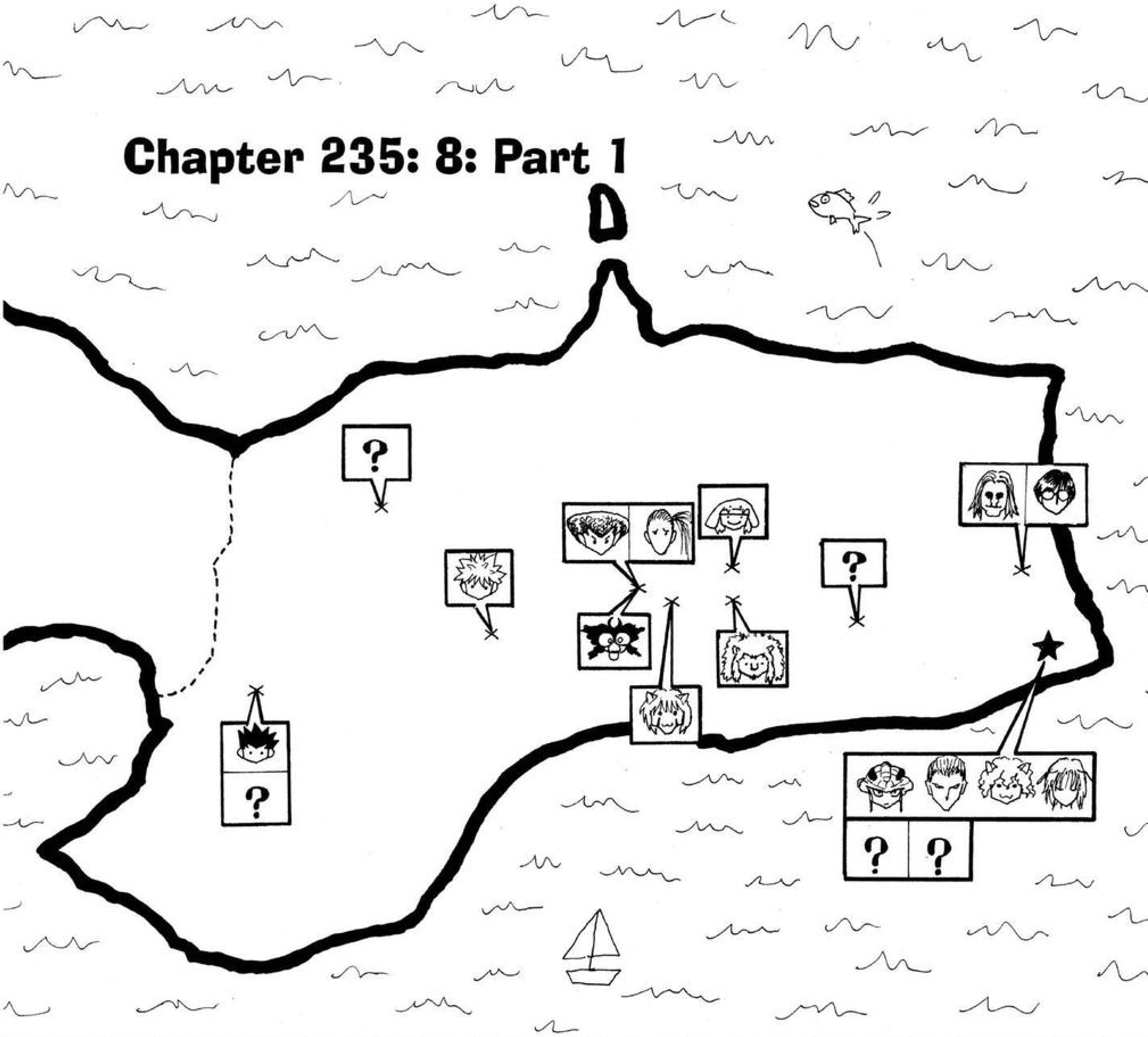

WHAT'S *THAT* ?!
I SEE A SUSPICIOUS TWOSOME.
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
LEAVE 'EM.
THEY'RE NOT OUR TARGET.
NO POINT IN DOING *EXTRA* WORK.
YES SIR!
IT SEEMS THEY WERE GOING TO AMBUSH SIR CHEETU.
OH, HE'S HERE TOO?

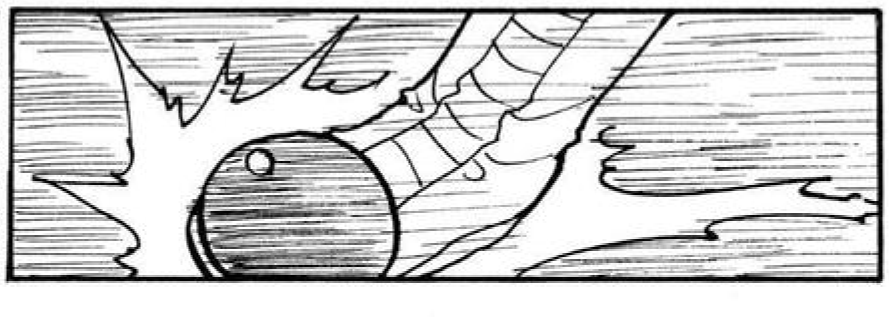

I LET HIM KNOW BEFORE HE RAN INTO THEM.
WHERE'D HE GO?
HE TOOK A DETOUR TO THE CAPITAL.
HE GAVE HIS REGARDS TO YOU, SIR LEOL.
WELL DONE.
NOW HE OWES ME ONE.
RING-A-LING♪
LEOL HERE.
THE TARGET IS FIGHTING WITH AN INFANTRY BATTALION IN LUONTON.
THE MILITARY CAN'T HANDLE IT, EH?
NO.
BUT I'M JUST STALLING HIM.
HE'S SPENDING MORE AND MORE TIME IN ONE DISTRICT.
AFTER ALL, HE'S BEEN ON THE MOVE FOR 30 HOURS STRAIGHT.
PREPARE AN AMBUSH TO THE NORTH.
IT'S JUST A HUNCH.
YES SIR.

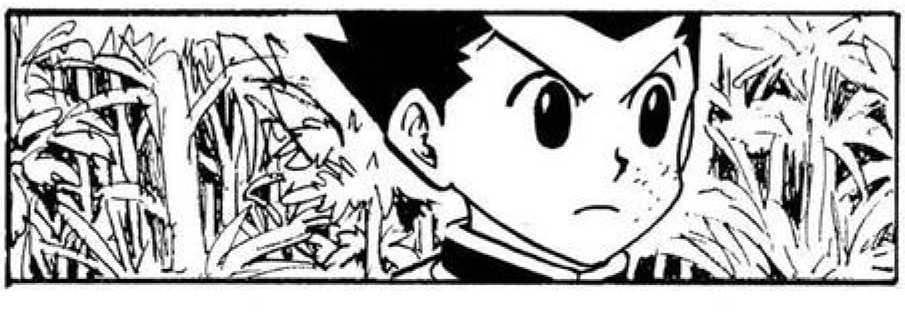

JOL-IK HAS FALLEN INTO ENEMY HANDS!!
YOU'LL ALL BE KILLED IF YOU STAY HOME!!
!
YOU LIE, REBEL!!
KSSH
JOL-IK APPEARED ON TV TO SHOW HE'S ALIVE...
AS A PUPPET.
THEY HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE ME NOW!!
I GOTTA GIVE UP ON INCITING RIOTS!!
JUST CRUSH ALL THE ARMIES AND PUPPETS I COME ACROSS!!

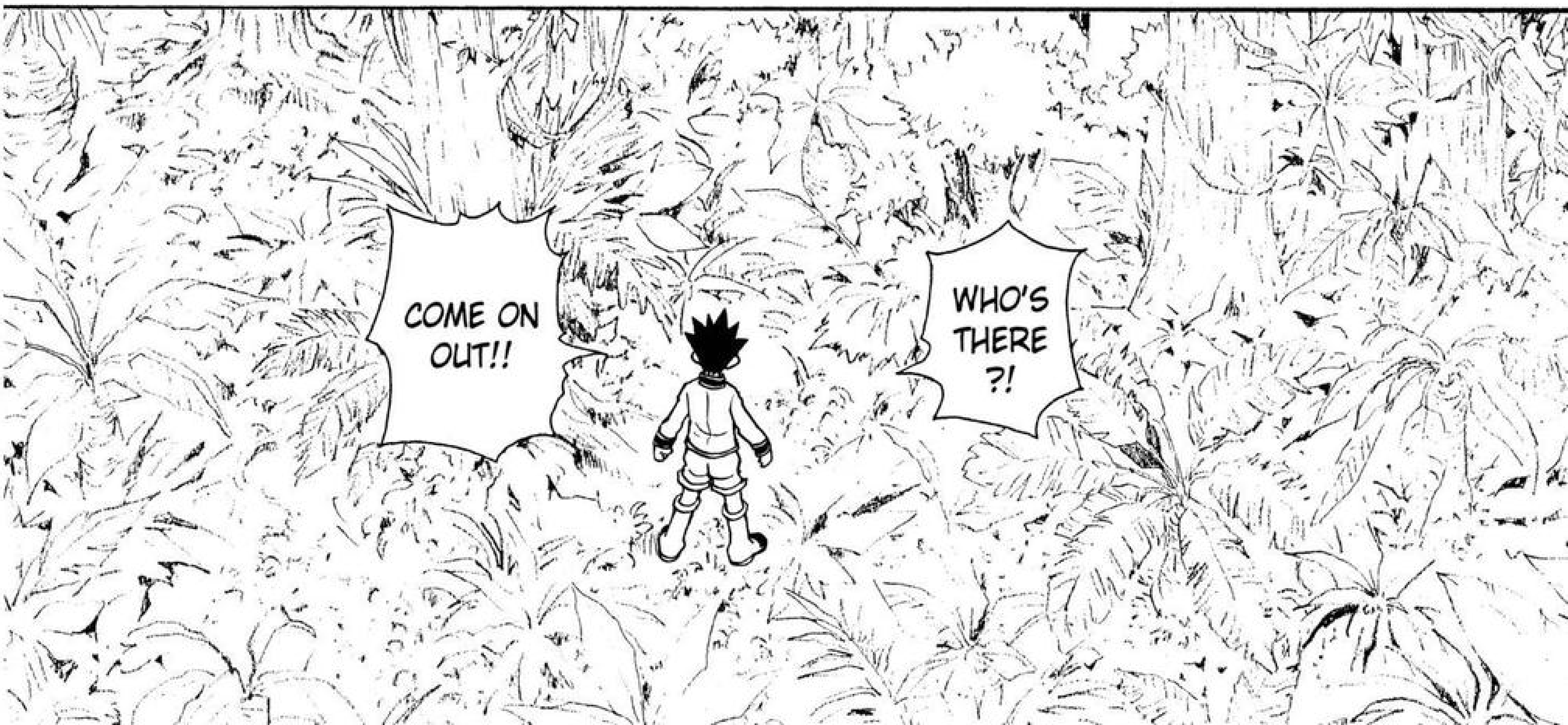

READ THIS WAY
...
NEXT...
I'LL TRY NORTH.
...
THERE'S NO MISTAKE.
I'M STILL...
...BEING FOLLOWED!!

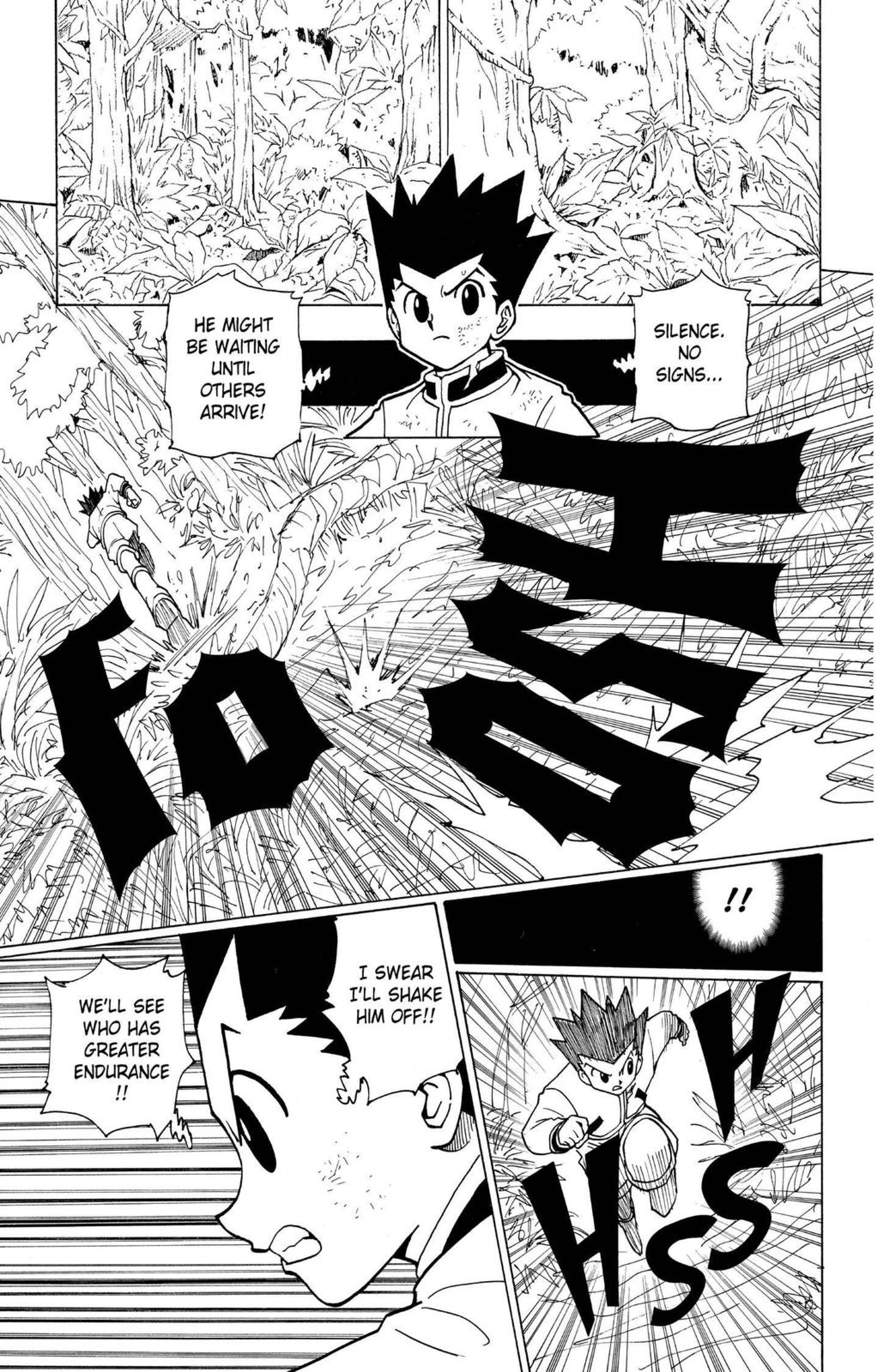
Chapter 235: 8: Part 1

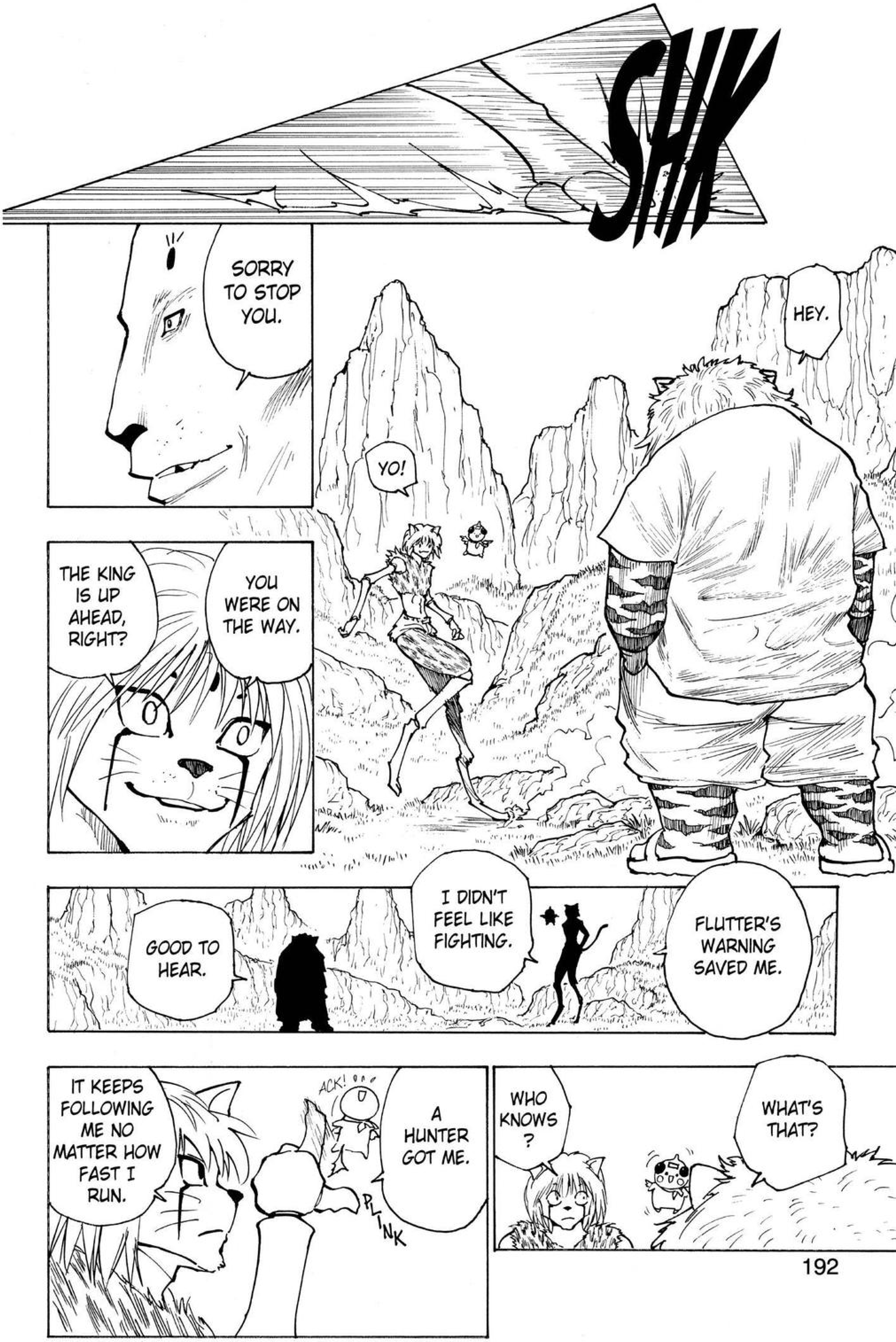


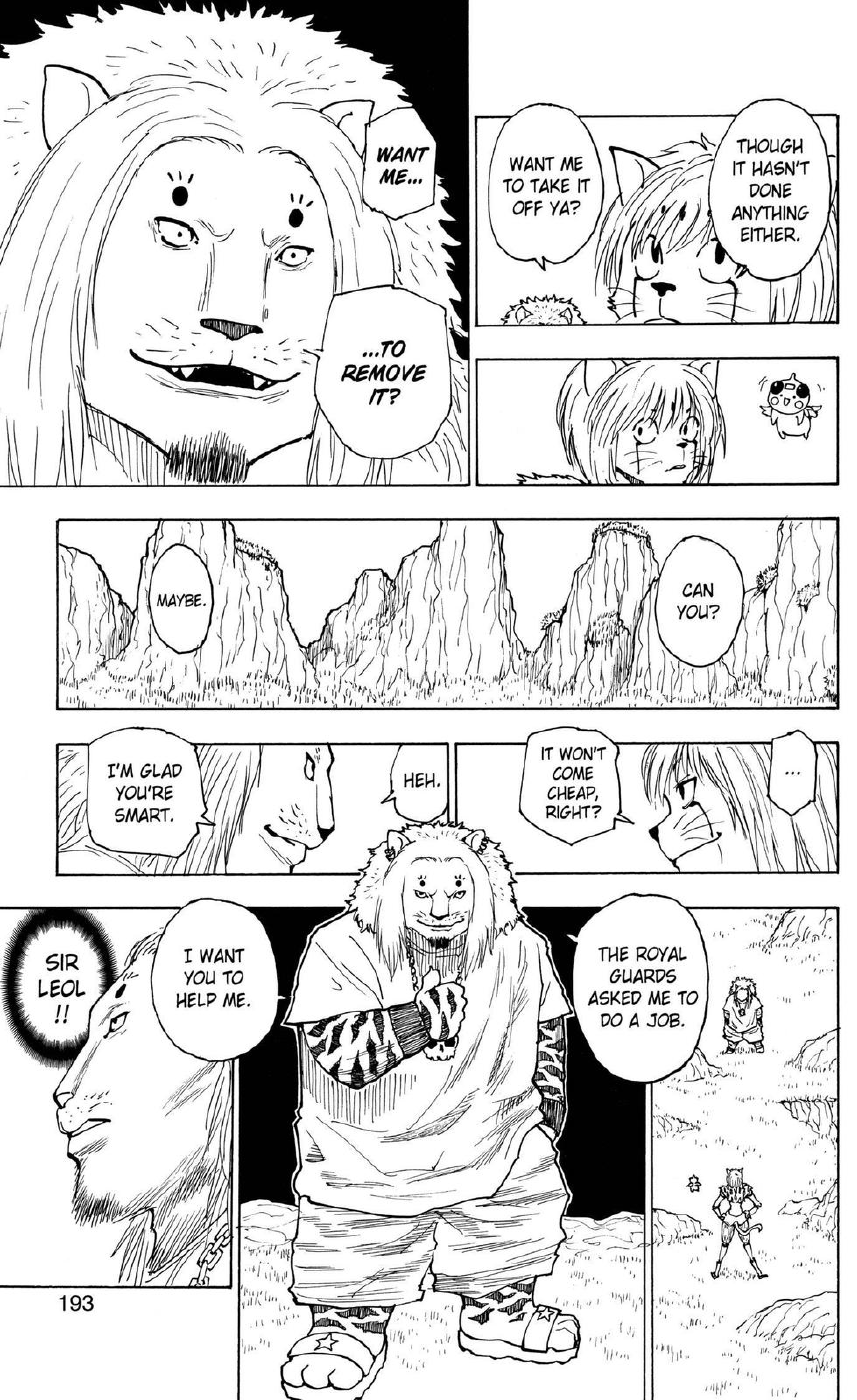


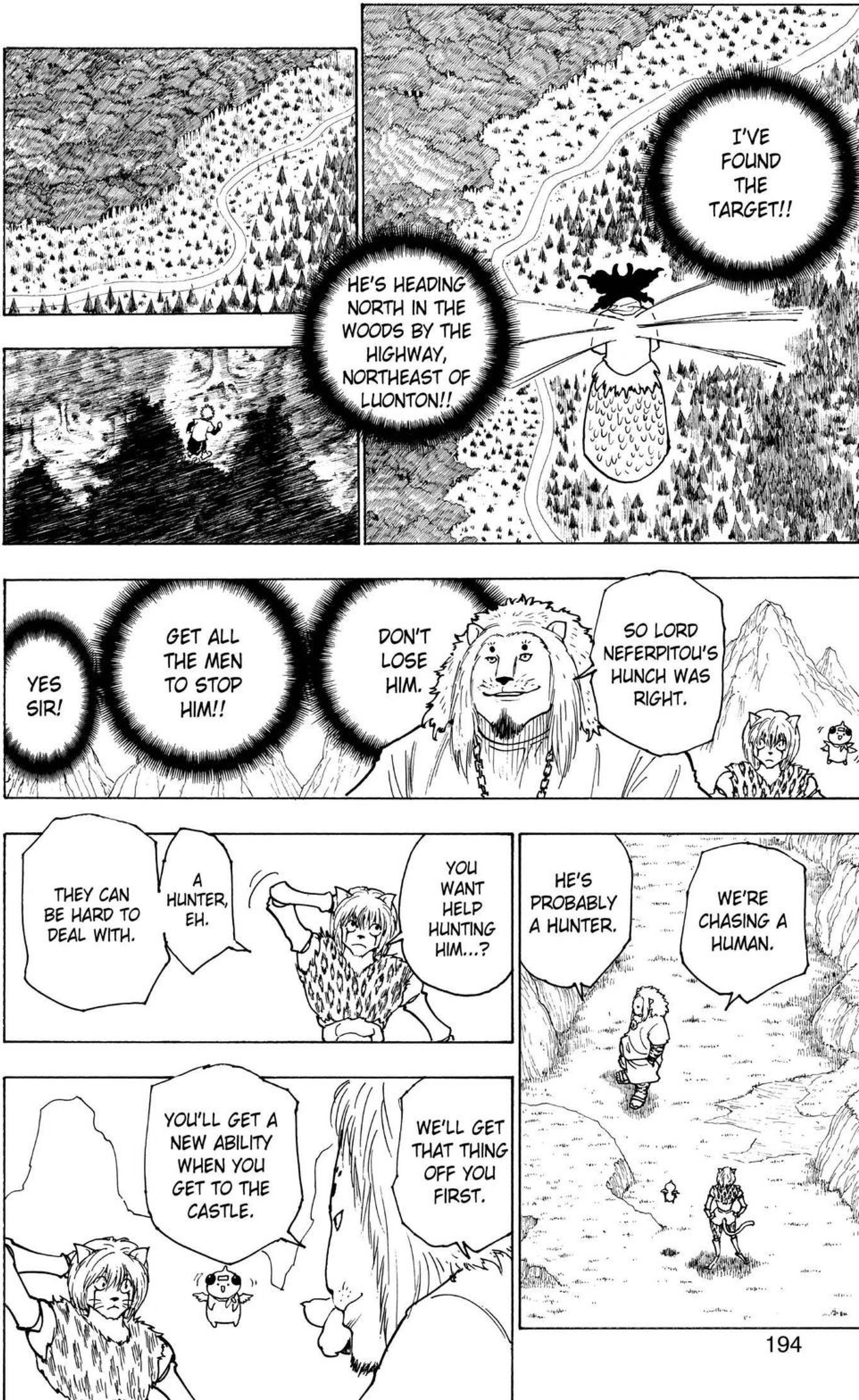


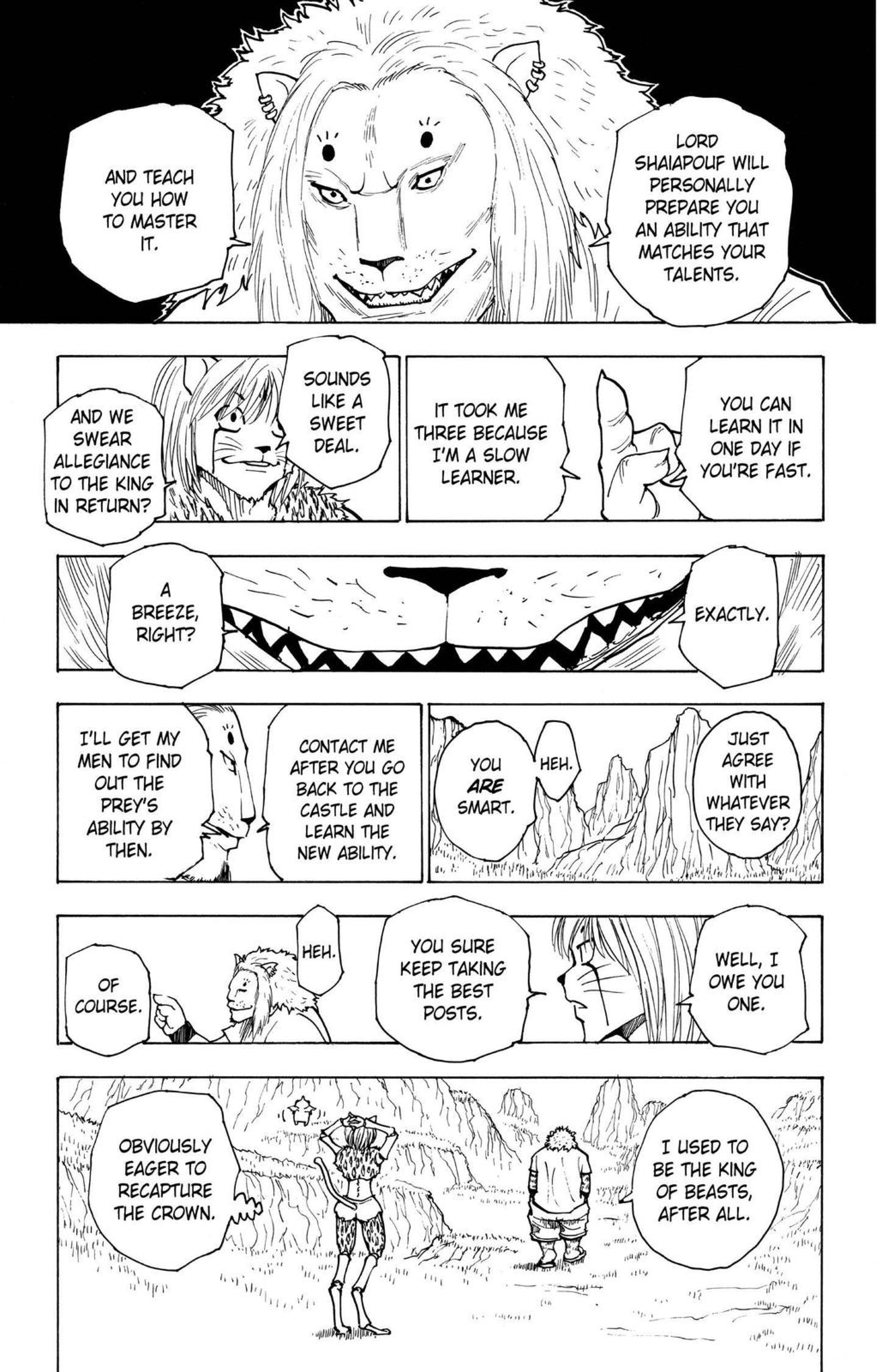

WHO'S THERE ?!
COME ON OUT!!

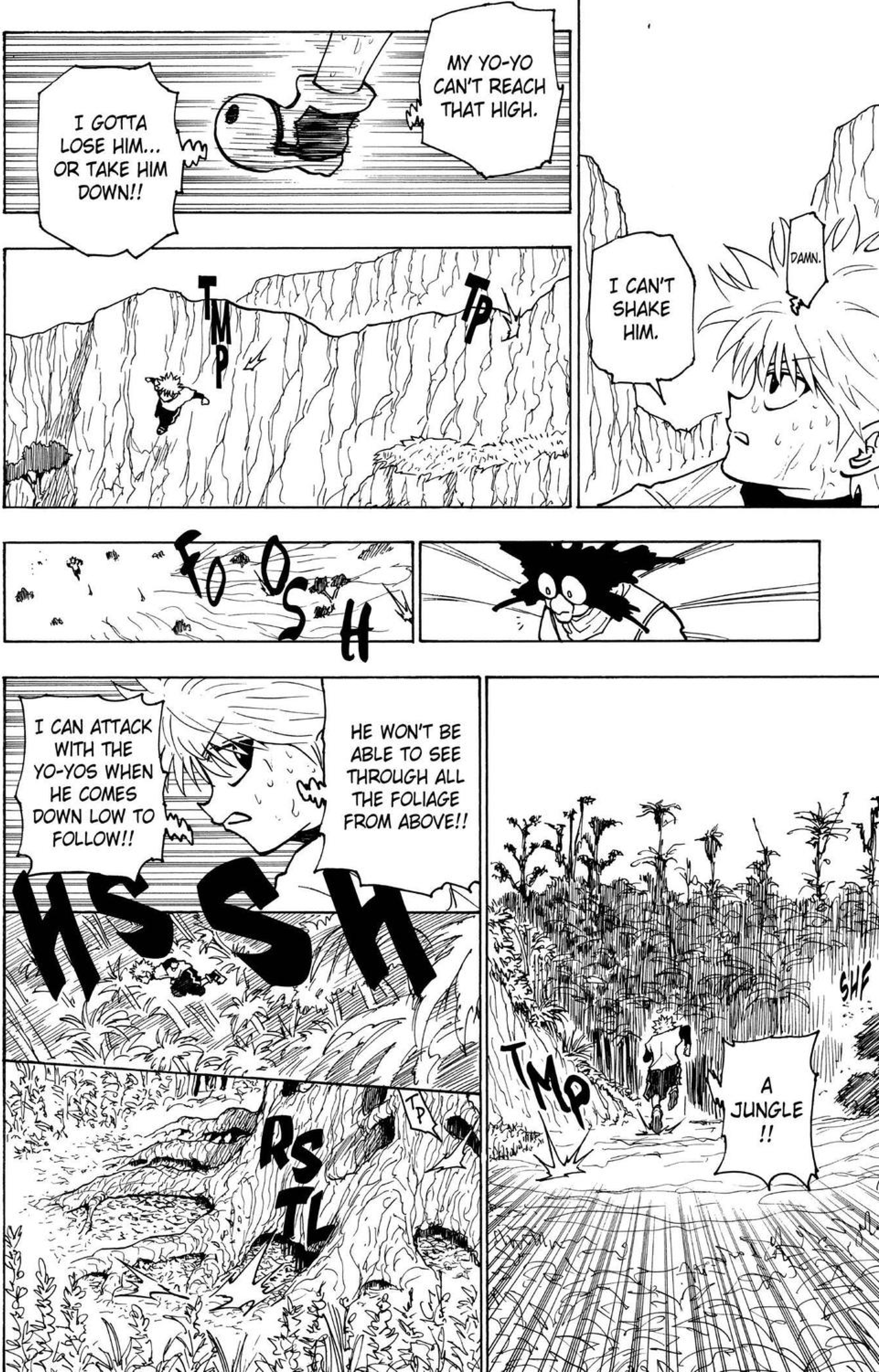

SILENCE. NO SIGNS...
HE MIGHT BE WAITING UNTIL OTHERS ARRIVE!
FOSH
!!
I SWEAR I'LL SHAKE HIM OFF!!
WE'LL SEE WHO HAS GREATER ENDURANCE!!
HHSS

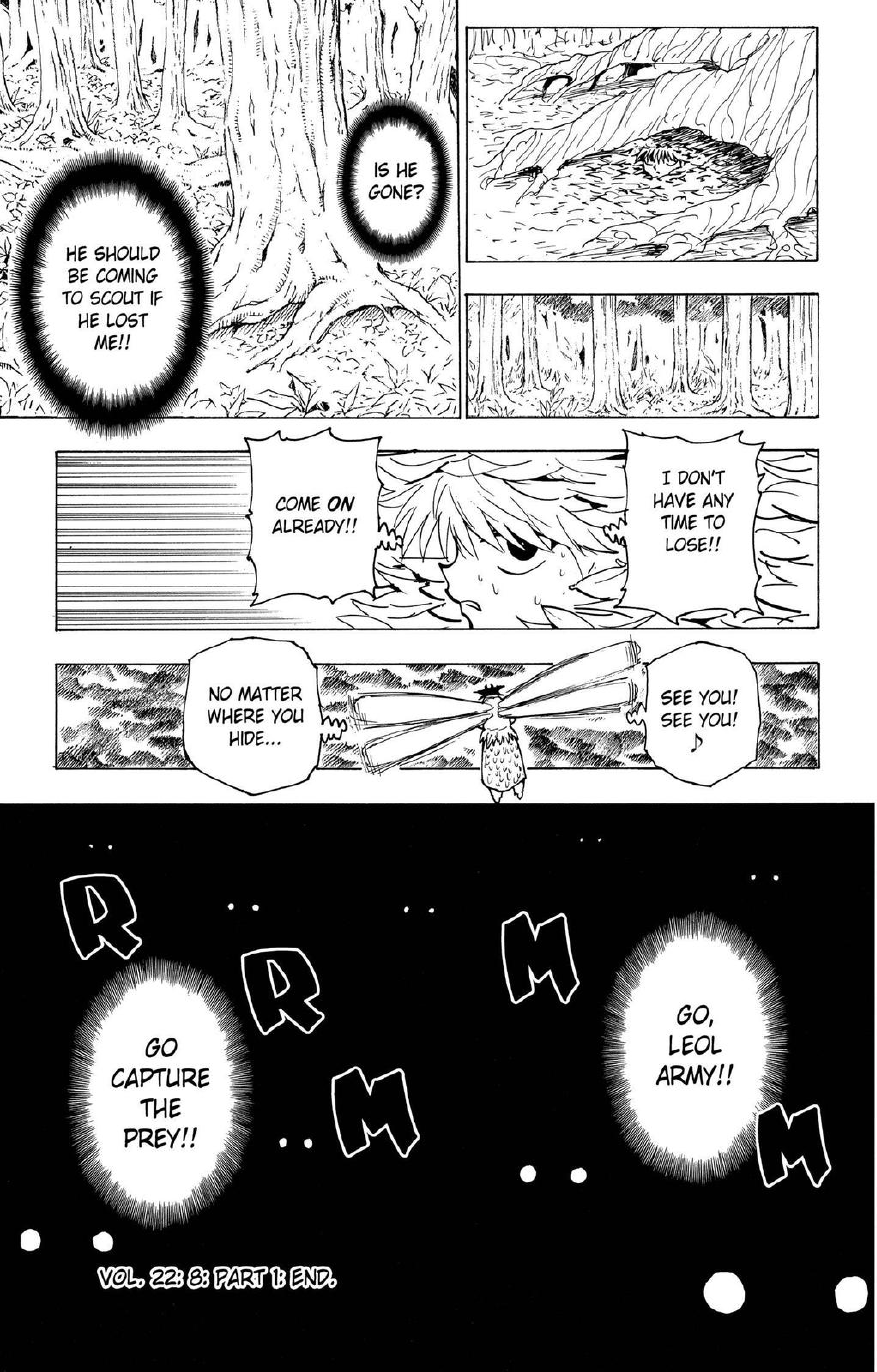

SHK
HEY.
YO!
SORRY TO STOP YOU.
YOU WERE ON THE WAY.
THE KING IS UP AHEAD, RIGHT?
FLUTTER'S WARNING SAVED ME.
I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE FIGHTING.
GOOD TO HEAR.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHO KNOWS?
ACK!
A HUNTER GOT ME.
PLINK
IT KEEPS FOLLOWING ME NO MATTER HOW FAST I RUN.


THOUGH IT HASN'T DONE ANYTHING EITHER.
WANT ME TO TAKE IT OFF YA?
WANT ME...
...TO REMOVE IT?
CAN YOU?
MAYBE.
...
IT WON'T COME CHEAP, RIGHT?
HEH.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE SMART.
THE ROYAL GUARDS ASKED ME TO DO A JOB.
I WANT YOU TO HELP ME.
SIR LEOL !!


I'VE FOUND THE TARGET!!
HE'S HEADING NORTH IN THE WOODS BY THE HIGHWAY, NORTHEAST OF LUONTON!!
SO LORD NEFERPITOU'S HUNCH WAS RIGHT.
DON'T LOSE HIM.
GET ALL THE MEN TO STOP HIM!!
YES SIR!
WE'RE CHASING A HUMAN.
HE'S PROBABLY A HUNTER.
YOU WANT HELP HUNTING HIM...?
A HUNTER, EH.
THEY CAN BE HARD TO DEAL WITH.
WE'LL GET THAT THING OFF YOU FIRST.
YOU'LL GET A NEW ABILITY WHEN YOU GET TO THE CASTLE.


LORD SHAIAPOUF WILL PERSONALLY PREPARE YOU AN ABILITY THAT MATCHES YOUR TALENTS.
AND TEACH YOU HOW TO MASTER IT.
YOU CAN LEARN IT IN ONE DAY IF YOU'RE FAST.
IT TOOK ME THREE BECAUSE I'M A SLOW LEARNER.
SOUNDS LIKE A SWEET DEAL.
AND WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE KING IN RETURN?
EXACTLY.
A BREEZE, RIGHT?
JUST AGREE WITH WHATEVER THEY SAY?
HEH.
YOU *ARE* SMART.
CONTACT ME AFTER YOU GO BACK TO THE CASTLE AND LEARN THE NEW ABILITY.
I'LL GET MY MEN TO FIND OUT THE PREY'S ABILITY BY THEN.
WELL, I OWE YOU ONE.
YOU SURE KEEP TAKING THE BEST POSTS.
HEH.
OF COURSE.
I USED TO BE THE KING OF BEASTS, AFTER ALL.
OBVIOUSLY EAGER TO RECAPTURE THE CROWN.


DAMN.
I CAN'T SHAKE HIM.
MY YO-YO CAN'T REACH THAT HIGH.
I GOTTA LOSE HIM... OR TAKE HIM DOWN!!
TP
TMP
FOOSH
SHF
TMP
A JUNGLE!!
HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH ALL THE FOLIAGE FROM ABOVE!!
I CAN ATTACK WITH THE YO-YOS WHEN HE COMES DOWN LOW TO FOLLOW!!
HSSH
TP
RSTL


IS HE GONE?
HE SHOULD BE COMING TO SCOUT IF HE LOST ME!!
I DON'T HAVE ANY TIME TO LOSE!!
COME **ON** ALREADY!!
SEE YOU! SEE YOU! ♪
NO MATTER WHERE YOU HIDE...
GO, LEOL ARMY!!
RRMMM
GO CAPTURE THE PREY!!

VOL. 22: 8: PART 1: END.